

*the*

**ROUNDER  
RECORDS**

*story*





JOHNNY ADAMS • THE BAILEY BROTHERS • THE BALFA FRÈRES  
MARCIA BALL, IRMA THOMAS & TRACY NELSON • BEAU JOCQUE • BEAUSOLEIL  
NORMAN BLAKE • RORY BLOCK • BLUE HIGHWAY • BLUEGRASS ALBUM BAND  
BO DOLLIS & THE WILD MAGNOLIAS • JAMES BOOKER • BOONE CREEK • BRAVE COMBO  
CHARLES BROWN • CLARENCE GATEMOUTH BROWN • RUTH BROWN • BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO  
MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER • JOHNNY COPELAND • JOSEPH CORMIER • COUNTRY COOKING  
COWBOY JUNKIES • THE COX FAMILY • J. D. CROWE AND THE NEW SOUTH • CULTURE  
DAILEY & VINCENT • DELTA SPIRIT • HAZEL DICKENS • JERRY DOUGLAS  
KATHLEEN EDWARDS • BELA FLECK • JIMMIE DALE GILMORE • THE GRASCALS  
NANCI GRIFFITH • DAVID GRISMAN • ED HALEY • SARAH HARMER  
TED HAWKINS • HAZEL AND ALICE • HIGHWOODS STRINGBAND • TISH HINOJOSA  
MICHAEL HURLEY • FLACO JIMÉNEZ • THE JOHNSON MOUNTAIN BOYS • JAMES KING  
KLEZMER CONSERVATORY BAND • ALHAJI BAI KONTE • ALISON KRAUSS • SLEEPY LaBEEF  
LONGVIEW • JOHN McCUTCHEON • STEVE MARTIN • D. L. MENARD & THE LOUISIANA ACES  
D. L. MENARD, EDDIE LeJEUNE, AND KEN SMITH • BILL MORRISSEY • WILLIE NELSON  
CARRIE NEWCOMER • NRBQ • MARK O'CONNOR • GEORGE PEGRAM • MADELEINE PEYROUX  
WILSON PICKETT • ROBERT PLANT • ROBERT PLANT AND ALISON KRAUSS  
PROFESSOR LONGHAIR • ReBIRTH BRASS BAND • OLA BELLE REED • TONY RICE  
JONATHAN RICHMAN • RIDERS IN THE SKY • ROOMFUL OF BLUES • RUSH • SON VOLT  
DON STOVER • JIMMY STURR • THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS • BUDDY THOMAS  
IRMA THOMAS • LINDA THOMPSON • GEORGE THOROGOOD & THE DESTROYERS  
THE THREE PICKERS: EARL SCRUGGS, DOC WATSON, RICKY SKAGGS  
JOE VAL & THE NEW ENGLAND BLUEGRASS BOYS • RHONDA VINCENT  
KEITH WHITLEY • WOODSTOCK MOUNTAINS REVUE

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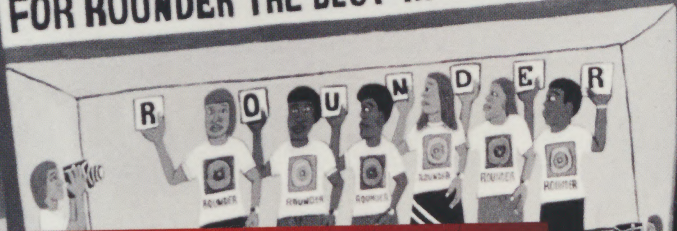
*the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: the 1970s*

*the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: the 1970s*

1. *Old Home Place* / **J. D. CROWE AND THE NEW SOUTH** 2:47
2. *Take Me Back to Happy Valley* / **THE BAILEY BROTHERS** 2:40
3. *Armadillo Breakdown* / **COUNTRY COOKING** 2:13
4. *High on a Mountain* / **OLA BELLE REED** 2:35
5. *Killing the Blues* / **WOODSTOCK MOUNTAINS REVUE** 3:53
6. *Johnson's Old Gray Mule* / **GEORGE PEGRAM** 2:15
7. *Cherry River Rag* / **ED HALEY** 2:52
8. *Sweet Lucy* / **MICHAEL HURLEY** 4:03
9. *Parlez-Nous À Boire* / **THE BALFA FRÈRES** 3:42
10. *Mrs. Scott Skinner/The Smith's A Gallant Fireman/The Earl of Seafield's Real* /  
**JOSEPH CORMIER** 3:39
11. *Tom and Jerry* / **MARK O'CONNOR** 2:14
12. *Down Home Summertime Blues* / **NORMAN BLAKE** 3:40
13. *Memory of Your Smile* / **BOONE CREEK** 2:32
14. *Things in Life* / **DON STOVER** 3:05
15. *Kitty Puss* / **BUDDY THOMAS** 2:22
16. *Who Broke the Lock?* / **HIGHWOODS STRINGBAND** 2:51
17. *Don't Put Her Down You Helped Put Her There* / **HAZEL AND ALICE** 3:45
18. *Jula Jekere* / **ALHAJI BAI KONTE** 5:02
19. *The Only Way* / **TONY TRISCHKA** 4:17
20. *Fluxology* / **JERRY DOUGLAS** 3:07
21. *La porte dans arriere* / **D. L. MENARD AND THE LOUISIANA ACES** 3:24
22. *I Ain't Broke But I'm Badly Bent* / **DAVID GRISMAN** 1:58
23. *Sparkling Brown Eyes* / **JOE VAL AND THE NEW ENGLAND BLUEGRASS BOYS** 3:05
24. *Who Do You Love* / **GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS** 4:19



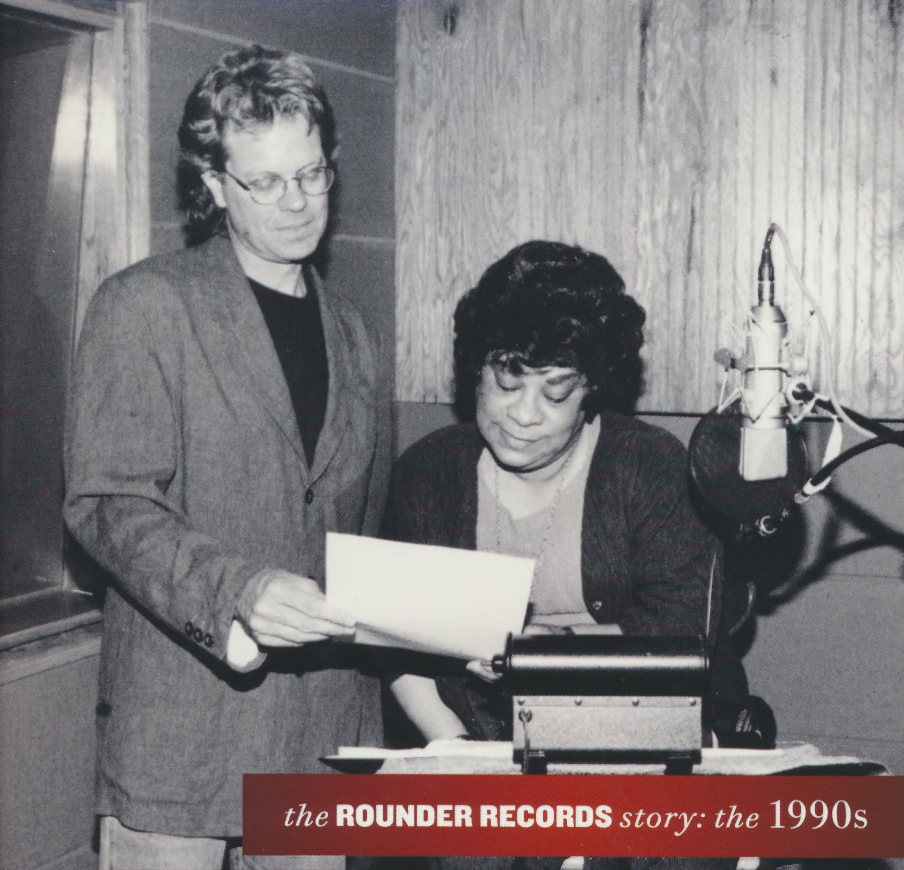
**HAPPY HAPPY PROGRESS  
FOR ROUNDER THE BEST IN THE WORLD**



*the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: the 1980s*

## *the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: the* 1980s

1. *Frosty* / **CLARENCE GATEMOUTH BROWN** 3:46
2. *Watch Your Step* / **TED HAWKINS** 2:13
3. *New Kind of Neighborhood* / **JONATHAN RICHMAN** 2:43
4. *I Never Go Around Mirrors* / **KEITH WHITLEY** 3:17
5. *Cold on the Shoulder* / **TONY RICE** 2:34
6. *Mama's Hand* / **HAZEL DICKENS** 4:30
7. *A Freylekhe Nakht In Gan Eydn* / **KLEZMER CONSERVATORY BAND** 1:49
8. *Babylon's Big Dog* / **CULTURE** 3:58
9. *Ya Ya* / **BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO** 3:35
10. *Tipitina* / **PROFESSOR LONGHAIR** 4:22
11. *Zydeco gris-gris* / **BEAUSOLEIL** 3:39
12. *Cowboy Jubilee* / **RIDERS IN THE SKY** 1:42
13. *Let the Whole World Talk* / **THE JOHNSON MOUNTAIN BOYS** 2:42
14. *Happy Wanderer* / **BRAVE COMBO** 2:30
15. *Classified* / **JAMES BOOKER** 3:16
16. *Got To Have You Be My Man* / **RORY BLOCK** 2:22
17. *Electricity* / **SLEEPY LaBEEF** 2:20
18. *Everybody Wants A Piece of Me* / **JOHNNY COPELAND** 2:55
19. *Whitewater* / **BÉLA FLECK** 3:10
20. *Once In A Very Blue Moon* / **NANCI GRIFFITH** 2:34
21. *My Blue Ridge Cabin Home* / **BLUEGRASS ALBUM BAND** 3:09
22. *Howjadoo* / **JOHN McCUTCHEON** 2:41
23. *Viva Seguin* / **FLACO JIMÉNEZ** 2:18
24. *Me and the Boys* / **NRBQ** 3:25



*the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: the 1990s*

*the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: the 1990s*

1. *Birches* / **BILL MORRISSEY** 3:20
2. *Baby, Now That I've Found You* / **ALISON KRAUSS** 3:49
3. *One Endless Night* / **JIMMIE DALE GILMORE** 3:46
4. *Sing It* / **MARCIA BALL, IRMA THOMAS, TRACY NELSON** 4:18
5. *Do Whatcha Wanna, Pt. 3* / **ReBIRTH BRASS BAND** 4:29
6. *A Virus Called the Blues* / **CHARLES BROWN** 6:50
7. *Only One Shoe* / **CARRIE NEWCOMER** 3:15
8. *There Is Always One More Time* / **JOHNNY ADAMS** 3:41
9. *Something in the Rain* / **TISH HINOJOSA** 5:02
10. *Bed by the Window* / **JAMES KING** 4:57
11. *Give Him Cornbread* / **BEAU JOCQUE** 4:55
12. *Valse de Kaplan* / **D. L. MENARD, EDDIE LeJEUNE, AND KEN SMITH** 3:19
13. *High Lonesome* / **LONGVIEW** 4:04
14. *In the Palm of Your Hand* / **ALISON KRAUSS AND THE COX FAMILY** 3:25
15. *False Friend Blues* / **RUTH BROWN WITH CLARENCE GATEMOUTH BROWN** 4:26
16. *Carnival Time* / **BO DOLLIS & THE WILD MAGNOLIAS** 2:42
17. *Standing Here at the Cross Roads* / **ROOMFUL OF BLUES** 4:17
18. *It's Harder Now* / **WILSON PICKETT** 3:43





*the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: the 2000s*

*the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: the 2000s*

1. *Don't Wait Too Long* / **MADELEINE PEYROUX** 3:10
2. *Down to the Wire* / **SON VOLT** 4:19
3. *More than A Name on A Wall* / **DAILEY & VINCENT** 2:57
4. *Roll In My Sweet Baby's Arms*  
/ **THE THREE PICKERS: EARL SCRUGGS, DOC WATSON, RICKY SKAGGS** 3:07
5. *Man With The Blues* / **WILLIE NELSON** 2:19
6. *Rebel Rouser* / **JIMMY STURR** 1:54
7. *Versatile Heart* / **LINDA THOMPSON** 3:24
8. *In the Middle Of It All* / **IRMA THOMAS** 4:45
9. *Please Read the Letter* / **ROBERT PLANT AND ALISON KRAUSS** 5:53
10. *Through the Window Of A Train* / **BLUE HIGHWAY** 3:08
11. *Resist* / **RUSH** 4:26
12. *Small Swift Birds* / **COWBOY JUNKIES** 3:39
13. *Basement Apt.* / **SARAH HARMER** 4:07
14. *I Have a Need for Solitude* / **MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER** 3:42
15. *Lonesome Wind Blues* / **RHONDA VINCENT** 3:02
16. *Me and John and Paul* / **THE GRASCALS** 3:13
17. *The Crow* / **STEVE MARTIN** 3:23
18. *The Only Sound That Matters* / **ROBERT PLANT** 3:44
19. *Trashcan* / **DELTA SPIRIT** 3:37
20. *Fibber Island* / **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS** 2:10
21. *Back To Me* / **KATHLEEN EDWARDS** 3:31

*the*

# **ROUNDER RECORDS**

*story*



## *the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: an introduction*

*By Geoffrey Himes*

In the summer of 1962, some long-forgotten functionary at Tufts University paired two incoming freshmen as roommates with unforeseen consequences. The two teenagers, Ken Irwin and Bill Nowlin, didn't know each other, but they quickly bonded over a shared enthusiasm for folk music. Ken had brought his Pete Seeger and Miriam Makeba albums and Bill his Kingston Trio records. They had one of the dorm's few record players, and sometimes when they felt ornery, they'd play the high-pitched, twangy bluegrass of the Greenbriar Boys' debut album to annoy some friends.

But as they did it again and again, a surprising thing happened: they began to really like the record. It dawned on them that the high harmonies and tough syncopation were not so different from the doo-wop and early rock'n'roll 45s they had loved in high school. The songs were obviously drawn from the same well of hand-me-down Southern music that the folk-revival singers were dipping into, but these versions were completely different: The rhythms were more muscular; the picking was more accomplished, and the singing was more confrontational. Before long the two students found themselves on the side of a highway, knapsacks on their backs, thumbs stretched outward, heading south in search of their first fiddle contest.

It was a conversion experience that affected not just the two college students and not just Marian Leighton, who was won over to the cause in 1967. It affected the shape of American roots music from 1970 onward, for those three friends founded Rounder Records that year and have run it ever since. Though



Bill Nowlin, Wade Mainer, Fiddlin' Steve Ledford and Ken Irwin, early 1970s  
(photo by Marian Leighton Levy with Bill Nowlin's camera)

the label soon branched out from bluegrass to embrace artists as diverse as George Thorogood, Gatemouth Brown, Irma Thomas, Keith Whitley, and Robert Plant, Irwin, Nowlin, and Leighton never abandoned that original vision. They were always interested in folk music, because they loved those songs about work and strikes, marriage and divorce, humor and violence, that arose from people performing for their friends and family. But they wanted to hear those songs delivered with more of a vigorous beat and an edgy attitude.

These three co-founders weren't much interested in the private, polite introspection of strum-along singer-songwriters; they wanted to hear the public soul-baring that takes place in dancehalls and union halls, in barrooms and cemeteries. It didn't matter if the musicians were working-class or middle-class, black or white, young or old, famous or obscure; it didn't matter if they played bluegrass or blues, Cajun or Klezmer, rock or soul. What mattered was that the music remember the past and yet be as urgent as a heart attack. One can hear both those qualities on the 88 tracks spread out over the four CDs in this box set, *The Rounder Records Story*, whether the recording is as old as 1970's "Johnson's Old Gray Mare" by George Pegram or as new as 2010's "Man with the Blues" by Willie Nelson.

When Irwin was hitch-hiking home from the Old Fiddler's Convention in Galax, Virginia, in August, 1969, his first ride was with James Lindsey, the leader of the Mountain Ramblers on Alan Lomax's legendary set, *Songs of the South*, and a frequent winner at Galax. The second ride was with Ken Davidson and his wife Sherri, who offered to put up Irwin overnight at their home in Charleston, West Virginia. The young amateur folklorist, who had rediscovered and recorded Clark Kessinger and Billy Cox, offered to introduce Irwin to the old-time fiddlers who had made so many legendary records in the 1920s. Irwin eagerly delayed his return home for a day, astonished to learn that people with more enthusiasm than

money, more taste than contacts, could start a record company and work with artists like Kessinger. When Irwin got back to Somerville, Massachusetts, he excitedly told Nowlin: "This guy started a record company, and he doesn't know anything about album covers or liner notes. We know designers and writers. Why don't we start a record company?" Nowlin's eyes lit up, and he said, "Yeah, why not?"

The following February, Irwin and Leighton, a couple since 1967, were hitch-hiking to Mardi Gras in New Orleans when they made a detour through Florida where the Davidsons were now living. Ken Davidson pulled out a friend's recording of banjoist George Pegram, who was such a star at the Old Time Fiddlers Convention in Union Grove, North Carolina, that he was called the Baron of Union Grove. Ken bought the rights to the tape for \$125. When Ken and Bill returned to Union Grove for the Easter weekend festival, the band category was won by the Spark Gap Wonder Boys, a group of Boston-area students who had translated their enthusiasm for old-time country music into an energetic live act. The wannabe record-company owners were sure some bigger label would snap up the band, but when none did, they offered to record the Spark Gappers.

So the fledgling record label had its first two acts, but now it needed a name. The three friends, threw out 30 or 40 names at each other — "Doorknob Records? Radiator Records?" — and just as quickly dismissed them. They weren't getting anywhere until someone said, "How about Rounder Records?" No one could dismiss that so quickly, because it worked so many ways. One of the trio's favorite acts was the Holy Modal Rounders, who took a wacky, bohemian approach to roots music. Rounders was the British game that gave birth to American baseball, a perfect example of evolution within a tradition. More than a few folk songs referred to rootless, footloose outcasts as rounders. And records, of course, were round. So Rounder it was. Many years later, when the Grateful Dead started a label called Round Records, copyright lawyers urged Rounder to sue. "Why should we sue,"

Nowlin responded, "if they want to assume the inferior position? They're Round; we're Rounder. Now, if they'd called themselves Roundest," he added with a chuckle, "we might have had a problem."

The first two albums from Rounder Records, *George Pegram* and the Spark Gap Wonder Boys' *Cluck Old Hen*, were released on October 22, 1970. One act was a banjo-playing sawmill worker from the North Carolina mountains; the other was a band of baby-boomer college kids who loved old-time mountain music no less than Pegram. So from the very beginning the company was combining the old and the new. When music writer Pete Welding later described the fledgling label as a home for "roots music and its contemporary offshoots," that sounded right to the Rounder founders.

Irwin, Leighton, and Nowlin had a real record company now. They could take their cardboard boxes of 12-inch vinyl albums to the festivals down South and set up a stand to sell their wares. It wasn't long before musicians and folklorists came up to the table, not to buy LPs but to pitch possible recordings. After a year of looking for projects to record, the trio was being asked to choose between more options than the company could handle. How would they choose among them?

The folk-music labels that they most admired were the creations of single-minded individuals: Moe Asch's Folkways Records, Dave Freeman's County Records, and Chris Strachwitz's Arhoolie Records. By contrast, Rounder was being run by a Cerberus-like three-headed owner. This was a handicap, in that it made each decision potentially more arduous, though most decisions were made with surprising ease, and in the long run it proved an asset. Though their tastes overlapped to a great extent, they were passionate about different things, and one person's passion would push a project forward while three mild approvals wouldn't. This inevitably broadened the label into a broadly eclectic roots-music

roster. Originally they shared all the jobs, but it turned out they each had different strengths. Nowlin got interested in business negotiations and took over that side of things. Irwin really loved the recording studio and concentrated on A&R and production. Leighton loved writing and conversation so she dealt with the press and radio. But every release still needed three yeses to go forward.

Just as important, the three were able to provide emotional as well as logistical support to one another when things got tough, as they often do in the music business. There was never a burden one person had to share alone. Even when Irwin and Leighton made the difficult transition from lovers to friends, their love for the music allowed them to continue to live in the same apartment and to work for the same company. And because they always made decisions as a collective, they were quite comfortable allowing other people into the process. So when Harvard grad student Mark Wilson turned them on to some Cape Breton and Appalachian musicians, the Rounder founders were willing to trust him. When musician Artie Traum offered to record the Woodstock music scene under the name Mud Acres, the founders gave him the go-ahead. When musician Dewey Balfa suggested Cajun musicians the label should record and folklorist Mark Pevar suggested African musicians, that was fine too. Irwin, Leighton, and Nowlin were politically progressive products of the '60s, and they saw Rounder Records as a form of community organizing, of bringing all these people involved in roots music under a common roof where they could reach more people.

The Rounder founders didn't pay themselves anything for the first four years as they continued to pursue their academic ambitions. But once they released landmark albums by the likes of guitarist Norman Blake and bluegrass J.D. Crowe, they came to realize that this was no longer a hobby but a career. Then they befriended a trio of blues-rock musicians from Delaware and everything changed for good. George Thorogood & the Destroyers drew their repertoire from

Robert Johnson and Elmore James, from Carl Perkins and Hank Williams, but they played the songs hard and fast. In the liner notes for the trio's third album, Irwin, Leighton, and Nowlin recalled their initial doubts: "What to do with it? Clearly the early Rolling Stones didn't belong on Rounder Records, largely a traditionally-based folk, bluegrass and blues label. And George Thorogood is probably closer in style and approach to the early Stones than he is to most of our catalogue."

That didn't stop the Rounder founders from allowing the band to sleep on their floor when the Destroyers came to Massachusetts. Nor did it stop Irwin, Leighton, and Nowlin from loving the band's live shows. Nor did it stop them from admiring musicians who would arrange touring around their baseball team's schedule. Finally the Rounder triumvirate decided to stop being so precious about it. Wasn't this roots music played with skill and conviction? Hadn't they fallen in love with the Greenbriar Boys because it was edgier and more muscular than the folk-revival singers? Wasn't this the same thing at a different degree of edginess and muscularity?

Rounder released *George Thorogood and the Destroyers* in 1977. Things started slowly at first, but then all hell broke loose. Radio and the press clamored for records and interviews. Record stores were ordering dozens of copies at a time instead of two or three. The Rounder staff expanded to meet the onslaught and even then everyone worked at a frenzied pace. After three albums Thorogood had outgrown the situation; the turning point came when the trio opened for the Rolling Stones at the New Orleans Superdome and the local distributor ordered only 25 copies of the group's three albums. A joint venture was formed with EMI America Records to take the band to the next level.

When the smoke cleared, Rounder was a changed company. It would no longer limit itself to acoustic music; it would be more open to drums, horns, and

amplifiers. That opened the door to Texas blues bands, New Orleans R&B groups, Louisiana zydeco bands, Jamaican reggae groups, borderland conjuntos, Rhode Island jump-blues horn bands, and Canadian rock'n'roll stars. This allowed the label to present the full range of roots music and to connect with the typical roots-music fan, who was rarely a one-genre fanatic but more typically liked blues and bluegrass, Cajun/zydeco and Tex-Mex. It worked because Irwin, Leighton (who eventually became Marian Levy), and Nowlin were those fans themselves. They loved all kinds of roots music; they just wanted to hear it with a physical push and a nothing-held-back commitment. The hundreds of thousands of listeners who bought one or more Rounder albums felt the same way.

Rounder had survived the test of fire that any hit presents to a small record company and would be better prepared the next time one came along. And the next time came along with strong-selling records from Gatemouth Brown, Nanci Griffith, Beau Jocque, Madeleine Peyroux, Dailey & Vincent, and especially Alison Krauss. Rounder didn't have to turn Krauss over to anybody, because it had better learned how to transmit roots music to a wider audience. Their promotion, publicity, and marketing had all improved to the point that Alison didn't need to "graduate" to a major label. It had proven it knew how to get TV appearances and Grammys for its artists.

During their 40 years with the company, the Rounder founders have seen a lot of roots-music labels start up and die out, but they survived because they married their vision to a pragmatism that made sure there was enough money on hand to write next week's payroll and to pay for next month's studio session. Typical of that balance of vision and pragmatism was the 1997 decision to turn over most business matters to John Virant, who had come on board as an unpaid intern and yet had worked his way up to company president/CEO. That's why they could create so many memorable records, enjoy so many successes, and win so many awards

for four full decades. When they did decide to finally sell Rounder to Concord Records in 2010, it was on their own terms and with the assurance that they would continue to shepherd the company in the near future. There has never been another record company quite like it.

*Geoffrey Himes* writes about music for the *Washington Post*, the *Baltimore City Paper*, *Jazz Times*, the *Fretboard Journal* and many more. His book, *In-laws and Outlaws: How Emmylou Harris, Rosanne Cash, Rodney Crowell, Ricky Skaggs and Steve Earle Fashioned a New King of Country Music*, will be published by the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2011. He would like to point out that some of his favorite Rounder artists — Steve Riley, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Si Kahn, Solomon Burke, Steve Jordan, Juliana Hatfield, Joe Ely, the Holmes Brothers, Joe Grushecky, Sun Ra, the Nashville Bluegrass Band, Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer, and the Tarbox Ramblers — have been squeezed out of this crowded box set.





Ken Irwin and  
Marian Leighton Levy  
selling records from their  
VW van, early 1970s  
(photo by Carl Fleischhauer)

## *the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: the 1970s*

There are hundreds of thousands of records, each with its own catalogue number, but just a handful are known by those digits. Only a few albums become so freighted with meaning for a particular musical community that even the numbers on their spines are committed to memory. Mention the phrase “Rounder 0044” to any true bluegrass fan, however, and they’ll know exactly what you mean. The official title was *J.D. Crowe & the New South* but to distinguish the recording from the band fans began to refer to the album as *Rounder 0044*. It wasn’t the first newgrass record, but it was the first to seize the imagination of the bluegrass world at large, thanks to the established credibility of Crowe and to the irresistible virtuosity of his new sidemen: mandolinist/fiddler Ricky Skaggs, guitarist Tony Rice, and Dobroist Jerry Douglas. The latter three names didn’t mean much in 1975, when the album was released, but over the next 35 years they would become indelible presences in the string-band world — and at Rounder Records.

Irwin and Leighton had approached Crowe at the Gettysburg Festival about making a banjo instrumental album. This gambit had worked for Rounder in the past, because such an album showcased a different side of an artist, emphasized the non-vocal elements that the label found so important and didn’t interfere with an artist’s more mainstream band projects. Early in Rounder’s history, for instance, the trio hoped to record their beloved Lilly Brothers, the band that played the Hill-billy Ranch in Boston seven nights a week, but a family tragedy led to Everett Lilly moving home to West Virginia. Instead the Rounders produced an early album of the band’s banjo player Don Stover, for the 1972 album, *Things in Life*. “When we started out,” Irwin explains, “my only goal was that when someone made their list of top ten banjo records or top ten fiddle records, we’d have a record that would be on that list. Don’s record was the first that met that standard.” But Crowe had

something more ambitious than a banjo album in mind; he saw this upstart little label as his chance to hatch the new sound in his head. Crowe had worked with bluegrass giants Jimmy Martin and Red Allen, but he felt restricted by the genre's repertoire and arrangements. He wanted to include tunes from folk-music writers like Gordon Lightfoot, Nashville writers like Rodney Crowell, and rock'n'roll writers like Fats Domino. He wanted to liberate his soloists from few and simple chord changes and allow them to find new progressions and new voicings. All three of those writers were on Rounder 0044, and the soloists did find those new pathways. But Crowe introduced these innovations so cunningly that the connection to bluegrass's past was never broken. On the lead-off track, "Old Home Place," penned by the bluegrass writers Dean Webb and Mitch Jayne, one could hear the sentiments of the past happily co-existing with the picking of the future. The album was a huge bluegrass hit and helped make Rounder a major player in that world for decades to come.

The company had prepared itself for this breakthrough by documenting the innovative edge of bluegrass. Irwin and Marian Leighton lived in Ithaca, New York, between 1967 and '71, where their string-band passion and community-organizing impulses led to a non-profit concert group called the Ithaca Area Friends of Bluegrass and Old-Time Music. Through that organization the couple befriended the sextet Country Cooking, which included such future newgrass stars as guitarist Russ Barenberg, fiddler Kenny Kosek, and the two banjoists Tony Trischka and Pete Wernick. The Rounder folks arranged to record the band "in a quiet room in the student union building at Cornell University," and the uptempo "Armadillo Breakdown" demonstrates the locomotive momentum and improvisatory freedom that would later surface in groups such as Wernick's Hot Rize, Trischka's Skyline, and Kosek's Breakfast Special, which also included Trischka and mandolinist Andy Statman, a later Country Cooking member. When Trischka made his own banjo-

instrumental album for Rounder, *Bluegrass Light*, he was backed by Kosek and Statman. On "The Only Way," one can hear that they were already playing jazz solos on string-band instruments in 1973.

Down the road in upstate New York, Woodstock's Artie Traum read an article in *Sing Out* about a new record company called Rounder and approached the founders, saying, "There's a whole music community up here, and I'd like to do an album on them." "Artie pulled that group together for this project and called it *Mud Acres / Music Among Friends*," Bill Nowlin remembers. "It wasn't really a band, just a bunch of people who played on each other's tracks." Those people included Artie, his brother Happy, the Lovin' Spoonful's John Sebastian, the Eagles' Bernie Leadon, the Greenbriar Boys' John Herald, Maria Muldaur, Pat Alger, Eric Andersen, Jim Rooney, Bill Keith, Rory Block, and Larry Campbell. They did three albums for Rounder, but their most enduring song was "Killing the Blues," written and sung by Roly Salley. Thanks to the surprising intervals of its melody and the paradoxically world-weary optimism of its lyrics, it was recorded again and again, by John Prine, Chris Smither, Shawn Colvin, and most notably by Robert Plant & Alison Krauss for Rounder. These northern string bands lent a liberating innocence to the music they had learned from the Southern originators, much as the Beatles had lent a similar innocence to the American R&B they drew upon. Joe Val and the New England Bluegrass Boys, for example, had been inspired to take up the music when the Lilly Brothers moved to Boston from West Virginia. Val may have been Italian-American, but he nails "Sparkling Brown Eyes," written by Clark Kessinger's Kanawha label mate, Billy Cox.

Also recorded in upstate New York was the Highwoods Stringband, which played old-timey music with a counter-cultural twist. The song "Who Broke the Lock?" always seems on the verge of flying apart even as it drives ever forward. "They had that wild, unrestrained sound that appealed to us," Nowlin notes. "They

reminded me of the Holy Modal Rounders in that way. We never had that problem where we turned up our noses if musicians weren't 'true folk.'" Rounder did several projects with the extended Holy Modal Rounders family, most notably *Have Moicy!* credited to Michael Hurley, the Unholy Modal Rounders, and Jeffrey Frederick & The Clamtones. That disc, represented here by "Sweet Lucy," was called "the greatest folk album of the rock era" by *The Village Voice's* Robert Christgau, though it was actually the greatest country-rock album of the hippie-folk genre.

Rounder's first album to break into five-figure sales was 1972's *Back Home in Sulphur Springs*, by Norman Blake, a Doc Watson acolyte and major stylist in his own right. Accompanied only by Dobroist Tut Taylor on "Down Home Summertime Blues," the tension between Blake's laid-back tenor and his dazzling flat-picking illustrates his ability to straddle old-grass and new. Three years later *J.D. Crowe & the New South* became Rounder's first album to hit six figures in sales, and the label's central role in bluegrass's new wave was cemented. When Skaggs and Douglas formed a new band called Boone Creek, they released the band's eponymous debut disc on Rounder. "Memory of Your Smile" is one of Skaggs' earliest lead vocals, and the arrangement with piano, drums, and electric bass anticipates his country hits to come. When Douglas wanted to record a Dobro-instrumental album, backed by Skaggs, Rice, bassist Todd Phillips, and fiddler Darol Anger, he released *Fluxology* on Rounder. When mandolinist David Grisman made a newgrass album with Rice, Douglas, Phillips, and two Bill Monroe alumni (fiddler Vassar Clements and banjoist Bill Keith), he called it *The David Grisman Rounder Album*. Skaggs sang a guest vocal on the old song, "I Ain't Broke but I'm Badly Bent."

In 1973 Irwin got a call from his friend Bill Smith in Nashville, who said, "We have this incredible 13-year-old fiddle player staying at our house and you have to hear him." The kid was Mark O'Connor, and Rounder quickly put him in

the studio with Blake and Taylor to make O'Connor's debut album, *National Junior Fiddling Champion*. The track here, "Tom and Jerry," featuring mandolinist Sam Bush, appeared on O'Connor's second Rounder album, *Pickin' in the Wind*, in 1976, which was followed by his third, *Markology*, in 1978. In 1979, he graduated from high school and joined the David Grisman Quintet. "We had good luck discovering musicians when they were young," Irwin remembers. "We signed Jerry Douglas when he was 17, Béla Fleck when he was 16, Alison Krauss when she was 14, and Mark when he was 13."

For all this emphasis on the innovative side of string-band music, the Rounder founders recognized that such developments didn't mean much if they lost their ties to the music's past. To remind musicians and listeners alike of this, the label continued to search out neglected old-timers and shine a light on them. One of their first two releases was the album *George Pegram* by the North Carolina banjo picker and sawmill worker. To hear him snorting and hollering about "Johnson's Old Gray Mule" over dizzyingly fast banjo and fiddle was to realize that the distance between the most traditional Southerners and the most bohemian Northerners was not so great after all. The Rounder founders had a special weakness for the close-interval "brother duets" that ranged from the Blue Sky Boys and Delmore Brothers to the Lilly Brothers and Whitstein Brothers. A strong link in that chain was the Bailey Brothers, former stars of radio shows such as *The Grand Ole Opry* and *Jamboree USA*, who recorded "Take Me Back to Happy Valley" for the label.

When folklorist Mark Wilson discovered rare home recordings of Ed Haley, a West Virginia fiddler so influential that John Hartford later wrote an unpublished book about him, Rounder gladly put them out, including the giddy "Cherry River Rag." When Wilson recorded one of Haley's top disciples, Buddy Thomas, playing the similarly giddy "Kitty Puss," Rounder released that too. And when Wilson became enthused about Cape Breton folk music, an idiosyncratic Scottish-Canadian

variant on string-band music in Nova Scotia, Rounder released a bunch of those sessions, including Joe Cormier's medley of spirited fiddle tunes, "Mrs. Scott Skinner/The Smith's a Gallant Fireman/The Earl of Seafield's Real." Wilson had befriended Nowlin when they were both Boston-area grad students, and they had made several field trips together down South and to Cape Breton. Because Nowlin, Leighton, and Irwin were used to working collectively, it was easy for them to incorporate another perspective.

Ralph Rinzler, one of the Greenbriar Boys who had first inspired Nowlin and Irwin, had gone on to manage Bill Monroe, to book the Newport Folk Festival, and to record the then-unknown Doc Watson. Having booked the Cajun band, Les Balfa Frères, for Newport, Rinzler recorded them in Harry Balfa's living room in Mamou, Louisiana, in 1965. Ten years later, after Irwin had recorded D.L. Menard in his kitchen in Erath, Rinzler trusted the new Rounder label enough to give them the Balfa tapes, including the Cajun standard, "Parlez-Nous à Boire" ("Let's Talk About Drinking (Not Marriage).") If the Balfas represented the more traditional roots of Cajun music, Menard, dubbed "The Cajun Hank Williams," represented the later fusion of Cajun and honky tonk, especially on his signature cheating song, "La Porte dans Arrière" ("The Back Door"). Rinzler also founded the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which took over the Mall in Washington every summer, and the Rounder founders were regular attendees.

As good 1970s leftists, they had long been frustrated that they had found so few female artists in the string-band world. At the Folklife Fest and the Delaware Bluegrass Festival, however, they found three women who were among the genre's most important artists of either gender. Ola Belle Reed had been raised in North Carolina's New River Valley, but like so many of their neighbors, her family had moved to the mid-Atlantic area during the Depression to find work. Those families had brought their fiddles and banjos with them, and Ola Belle, her brother Alex

Campbell, and her husband Bud Reed founded the New River Ranch in Rising Sun, Maryland, to entertain the transplants. Johnny Cash, Bill Monroe, and the Louvin Brothers performed on that creekside plywood stage, but Ola Belle soon became a major attraction by dint of her songwriting and singing. Her best known composition, "High on a Mountain," was eventually recorded by Del McCoury, Hot Rize, Marty Stuart, Lucy Kaplansky, and many more, but no one ever sang it with the high-pitched twang and intense personal investment that Ola Belle brought to it. When Levon Helm's daughter Amy co-founded a new folk band in 2001, she and her pals named it Ollabelle in honor of Reed.

Hazel Dickens was part of that same mid-century migration from Appalachia to Maryland, though she came from the coal fields of West Virginia and ended up in urban Baltimore. It was there she met Bill Monroe and such bohemian bluegrass lovers as Mike Seeger and Alice Gerrard. "Mike was the first person outside our culture to validate our music," Dickens confirms. "He looked on it as an art form, while to us it was just what we did. We never thought anyone else would be interested." It was also in Baltimore that Dickens found her songwriting gift and her singing voice. When Dickens jumped from lead on the verses to tenor on the choruses, her blend with Gerrard created an unprecedented female equivalent of the classic bluegrass harmonies so loved by the Rounder founders. And when Dickens wrote songs as pointed as "Don't Put Her Down, You Helped Put Her There" or "Black Lung," her new college-educated audience heard them as political commentary. Dickens heard them as diary-like commentaries on her daily life.

This disc presents just a small fraction of the records released during Rounder's first decade, but it accurately reflects the emphasis on string-band music. A lot of it was bluegrass, newgrass, or old-time music, but even the music from far outside Appalachia was played on acoustic string instruments. Joe Cormier's Cape Breton reels, the Balfa Brothers' Cajun two-steps and Michael Hurley's country-



Bill Nowlin and Marian Leighton Levy in the Rounder warehouse, 1978  
(photographer unknown)

rock all featured the fiddle prominently. Even the tune “Jula Jekere” by Gambia’s Alhaji Bai Konte was string-band music of a sort. Konte played the West African kora, which featured twenty-some strings rising vertically from a large gourd, but in the context of this box set, it’s easy to hear the kora’s echoes in the high-pitched runs of a mandolin or the low-pitched snap of a banjo.

Thus the shock of hearing George Thorogood’s “Who Do You Love?” at the end of this disc is not unlike first hearing a Rounder album in 1978 with such in-your-face drums and amps. It wasn’t the label’s first release with electric instruments (the Bob Riedy Blues Band had released *Lake Michigan Ain’t No River, Chicago Ain’t No Hilly Town* the year before), but it was the first widely-heard example. And soon it became more widely heard than anything Rounder had ever done. “Who Do You Love?” had been written and recorded by Bo Diddley for Chess Records in 1956, but when Thorogood did it, everything sounded quicker and thicker. Part of it was an improvement in recording studios, but part of it was also Thorogood’s guitar technique. “I try to play the whole guitar at once,” he explained. “That’s the trick: to get a big, full sound without relying on the volume knob. I’m really heavy-handed on the low strings, and if you muffle the strings with the side of your right hand so the notes don’t keep ringing, you get that chunky sound.”

Thorogood had transformed Diddley’s guitar sound, in much the same way that Diddley had transformed Muddy Waters’ and that Waters had transformed Charley Patton’s. It was still roots music, but with each adaptation, the beat got chunkier and the vocals more assertive. It was a new way to play an old tradition, not so different from what J.D. Crowe had done with Bill Monroe.

# 1975 S

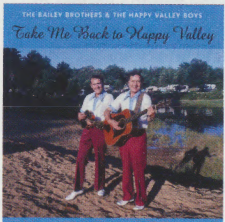


## “Old Home Place” / **J. D. CROWE AND THE NEW SOUTH**

(Dean Webb & Mitch Jayne/Lansdowne-Winston ASCAP) 2:43

From the album *J. D. Crowe and the New South* (Rouner 0044), released in August 1975. Recorded by Steve Hamm at Track Recorders, Silver Spring MD in January 1975. Produced by J. D. Crowe.

*J. D. Crowe* – banjo and baritone vocal; *Tony Rice* – guitar and lead vocal; *Ricky Skaggs* – mandolin and tenor vocal; *Bobby Slone* – bass; *Jerry “Flux” Douglas* – Dobro.



## “Take Me Back to Happy Valley”

**THE BAILEY BROTHERS** 2:40

(Charles & Dan Bailey/Happy Valley Music BMI)

From the album *Take Me Back to Happy Valley* (Rouner 0030), released in June 1975. Recorded by Joe Overholt and Mark Bogart at El-tech Studios, Knoxville TN on July 16-17, 1974.

*Danny Bailey* – vocal and guitar; *Charles Bailey* – vocal and mandolin; *Larry Mathis* – banjo; *Clarence “Tater” Tate* – fiddle; *E. P. “Jake” Tullock* – bass.



## “Armadillo Breakdown” / **COUNTRY COOKING**

(Peter Wernick/Happy Valley Music BMI) 2:14

From the album *Country Cooking / 14 Bluegrass Instrumentals* (Rouner 0006), released in October 1971. Recorded in May 1971 in a quiet room in the student union building at Cornell University, Ithaca NY. Engineered by Ted Osborn.

*Russ Barenberg* – guitar; *Kenny Kosek* – fiddle; *John Miller* – bass; *Harry “Tersh” Gilmore* – mandolin; *Tony “Toad” Trischka* – banjo; *Peter Wernick* – banjo.

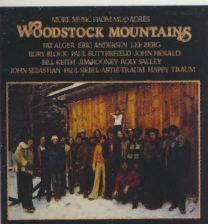


## “High On a Mountain” / **OLA BELLE REED**

(Ola Belle Reed/Midstream Music BMI) 2:36

From the album *Ola Belle Reed* (Rouner 0021), released January 1973. Recorded by Gei Zantzinger, Devault, Pennsylvania, Fall 1972. Produced by Gei and Ruth Zantzinger.

*Ola Belle Reed* – banjo, guitar, vocal; *Bud Reed* – banjo, guitar; *David Reed* – banjo, guitar; *John Miller* – fiddle; *Alan Reed* – banjo, guitar.



“Killing the Blues”

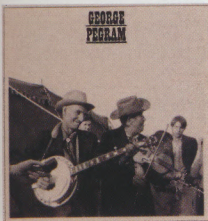
**WOODSTOCK MOUNTAINS REVUE**

(Rowland Salley/Telechrome Music ASCAP) 3:53

From the album *Woodstock Mountains* (Rounder 3018), released in May 1977.

Recorded by John Holbrook and Thomas Mark at Bearsville Sound Studios, Bearsville NY on January 13-15, 1977. Produced by George James with Artie Traum and Happy Traum.

*Roly Salley* – guitar and lead vocal; *Pat Alger* – lead guitar; *Artie Traum* – bass; *Happy Traum* – banjo; *Jim Rooney* – guitar; *Lee Berg* – vocal.



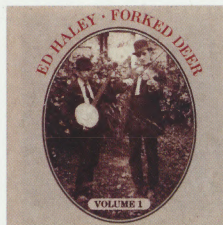
“Johnson’s Old Gray Mule” / **GEORGE PEGRAM**

(public domain) 2:16

From the album *George Pegram* (Rounder 0001), released October 1970.

Recorded by Charlie “Farout” Faurot.

*George Pegram* – banjo and vocal; *Clyde Isaacs* – mandolin; *Fred Cockerham* – fiddle; *Jack Bryant* – guitar.

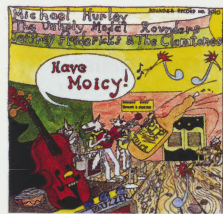


“Cherry River Rag” / **ED HALEY**

(Ed Haley/Done Gone Publishing BMI) 2:53

From the album *Parkersburg Landing* (Rounder 1010), released May 1976, currently available on *Forked Deer* (Rounder 1133). Recorded by Mark Wilson and Guthrie T. Meade.

*Ed Haley* – fiddle; *Ralph Haley* – guitar; *Ella Haley* – mandolin.



“Sweet Lucy” / **MICHAEL HURLEY**

(Michael Hurley/Snocko Music BMI) 4:04

From the album *Have Moicy* (Rounder 3010), released in February 1976. Recorded by John Nagy, with assistance by Thom Foley, on July 15 & 16, 1975 at Dimension Sound Studios, Boston MA.

Produced by John Nagy.

*Michael Hurley* – lead vocal and rhythm guitar; *Wax Iwaskiewicz* – guitar; *Robert “Frog” Nickson* – drums; *Dave Reisch* – bass; *Paul Presti* – slide guitar; *Peter Stampfel* – fiddle.

The Balfa Brothers



“Parlez-Nous À Boire” / **THE BALFA FRÈRES**

(Dewey Balfa/Flat Town Music BMI) 3:43

From the album *Louisiana Cajun French Music from the Southwest Prairies* (Rounder 6001), released in July 1976. Recorded by Ralph Rinzler at Harry Balfa’s house in Mamou, Louisiana on October 24, 1965. Produced by Ralph Rinzler.

*Dewey Balfa* – fiddle and vocal; *Will Balfa* – fiddle;  
*Rodney Balfa* – fiddle; *Harry Balfa* – triangle;  
*Hadley Fontenot* – accordion.

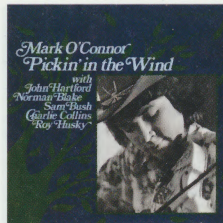


“Mrs. Scott Skinner/The Smith’s A Gallant Fireman/  
The Earl of Seafield’s Real” / **JOSEPH CORMIER**

(J. S. Skinner) / (trad., variations by J. S. Skinner) / (Donald Grant)  
3:40

From the album *Scottish Violin Music from Cape Breton Island* (Rounder 7001), released November 1974, currently available on *The Dances Down Home* (Rounder 11593). Recorded by Mark Wilson in Allston, Massachusetts on June 4, 1974. Produced by Mark Wilson.

*Joe Cormier* – violin; *Edward Irwin* – piano;  
*Edmund Boudreau* – guitar.

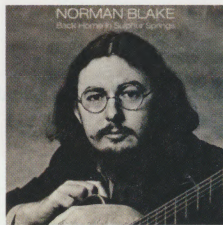


“Tom and Jerry” / **MARK O’CONNOR**

(Trad., arr. by Mark O’Connor/C Minor Music BMI) 2:15

From the album *Pickin’ in the Wind* (Rounder 0068), released June 1976. Recorded by Charlie Bragg and the House of Cash, Hendersonville, Tennessee on June 11 and 12, 1975. Mixed by John Nagy at Dimension Sound Studios, Boston. Produced by Mark and Marty O’Connor.

*Mark O’Connor* – fiddle; *Sam Bush* – mandolin;  
*Charlie Collins* – guitar.



“Down Home Summertime Blues” / **NORMAN BLAKE**

(Norman Blake/Nannor Music BMI) 3:40

From the album *Back Home in Sulphur Springs* (Rounder 0012), released June 1972. Recorded at Glaser Sound Studios, Nashville on December 30, 1971. Mixed by Claude J. Hill. Produced by Norman Blake and Tut Taylor for Rocky Road Productions. Executive producer: Mike Melford.

*Norman Blake* – guitar and vocal; *Tut Taylor* – Dobro.



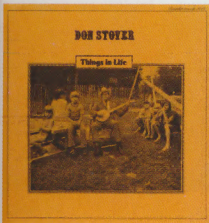


“Memory of Your Smile” / **BOONE CREEK**

(Ruby Rakes/Trio Music BMI-Fort Knox Music BMI) 2:33

From the album *Boone Creek* (Rounder 0081), released August 1977. Recorded and mixed by Dana Thomas and Sundance at Starday, Nashville.

*Ricky Skaggs* – guitar, lead and baritone vocal; *Cheryl White* – tenor vocal; *Jerry Douglas* – Dobro; *Wes Golding* – guitar; *Fred Wooten* – lead guitar; *Earl Grigsby* – bass; *Karl Himmel* – drums and percussion; *Joel DeGregorio* – piano.

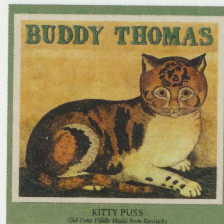


“Things in Life” / **DON STOVER**

(Don Stover/Bathurst Music BMI) 3:06

From the album *Things in Life* (Rounder 0014), released in August 1972. Recorded at Aengus Enterprises, Fayville MA in the spring of 1972.

*Don Stover* – banjo and vocal; *David Grisman* – mandolin; *John Hall* – fiddle; *Dave Dillon* – guitar; *Dan Marcus* – guitar; *Joe Diviney* – bass.

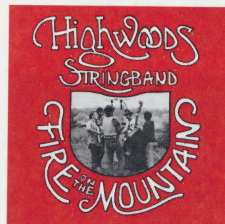


“Kitty Puss” / **BUDDY THOMAS**

(Buddy Thomas/Happy Valley Music BMI) 2:22

From the album *Kitty Puss* (Rounder 0032), released in May 1976. Recorded by Mark Wilson and Guthrie T. Meade in Waldorf, MD, December 23, 1973.

*Buddy Thomas* – fiddle; *Leona Stamm* – guitar.



“Who Broke the Lock?” / **HIGHWOODS STRINGBAND**

(public domain) 2:52

From the album *Fire on the Mountain* (Rounder 0023), released in April 1973. Recorded by Doug Dorschug outside of his home in Van Etten NY in September 1972.

*Mac Benford* – banjo and lead vocal; *Bob Potts* – fiddle and vocal; *Walt Koken* – fiddle and vocal; *Doug Dorschug* – guitar and vocal; *Jenny Cleland* – bass and vocal.



HAZEL&ALICE

“Don’t Put Her Down You Helped Put Her There”

**HAZEL AND ALICE**

(Hazel Dickens/Happy Valley Music BMI) 3:46

From the album *Hazel & Alice* (Rounder 0027), released in November 1973. Recorded by R. N. Drevo at Urban Recordings, Bethesda MD on October 14, 1972, January 7, 1973, January 21, 1973. Produced by Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard.

*Hazel Dickens* – lead vocal and bass guitar; *Alice Gerrard* – harmony vocal and guitar; *Mike Seeger* – mouthharp; *Tracy Schwarz* – fiddle.

Alhaji Bai Konte

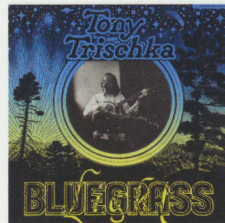


“Jula Jekere” / **ALHAJI BAI KONTE**

(public domain) 5:02

From the album *Alhaji Bai Konte* (Rounder 5001), released in June 1973. Recorded by Marc D. Pevar in Brikama, The Gambia. Produced by Mark D. Pevar.

*Alhaji Bai Konte* – kora.

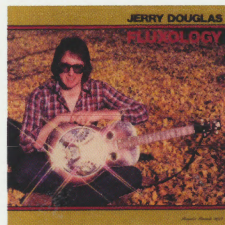


“The Only Way” / **TONY TRISCHKA**

(Tony Trischka/Happy Valley Music BMI) 4:18

From the album *Bluegrass Light* (Rounder 0048), released July 1974. Recorded by Bill Storm and Doug MacLean at Sleepy Hollow Studios, Ithaca, New York in the Fall of 1973.

*Tony Trischka* – banjo; *Moshe Savitsky* – Dobro; *Kenny Kosek* – fiddle; *Jim Tolles* – guitar; *Andy Statman* – mandolin; *Roger Mason* – bass; *Chris Ditson* – drums.



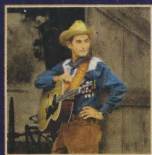
“Fluxology” / **JERRY DOUGLAS**

(Jerry Douglas/Happy Valley Music BMI) 3:07

From the album *Fluxology* (Rounder 0093), released January 1977. Recorded at 1750 Arch Studios, Berkeley CA by Bob Shumaker.

*Ricky Skaggs* – mandolin; *Tony Rice* – guitar; *Todd Phillips* – bass; *Darol Anger* – violin; *Jerry Douglas* – Dobro.

D. L. MENARD AND THE LOUISIANA ACES



“La porte dans arrière”

**D. L. MENARD AND THE LOUISIANA ACES**

(D. L. Menard/Flat Town Music BMI) 3:25

From the album *The Louisiana Aces* (Rounder 6003), released in July 1974. Recorded by Dick Spottswood and Ken Irwin in the Menard family’s kitchen in Erath LA.

*D. L. Menard* – guitar and vocal; *Arconge “Coon” Touchet* – steel guitar; *John Suire* – drums; *Joe Lopez* – fiddle; *Elias “Shunk” Badeaux* – accordion.

The  
*David Grisman*  
Rounder Compact Disc



“I Ain’t Broke But I’m Badly Bent”/ **DAVID GRISMAN**

(Martha Ellis/Tannen Music BMI) 1:59

From the album *The David Grisman Rounder Album* (Rounder 0069), released July 1976.

Recorded by Sundance and Dana Nelson at Starday Studios, Nashville. Mixed at Starday by Sundance and David Grisman.

Produced and arranged by David Grisman.

*David Grisman* – mandolin; *Tony Rice* – guitar; *Vassar Clements* – violin; *Bill Keith* – banjo; *Jerry Douglas* – Dobro; *Todd Phillips* – bass; *Ricky Skaggs* – lead vocal.

one morning  
in  
may  
joe val  
the new england  
bluegrass boys



“Sparkling Brown Eyes”

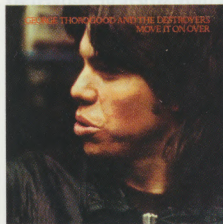
**JOE VAL AND THE NEW ENGLAND BLUEGRASS BOYS**

(Billy Cox/Poca River Music BMI) 3:06

From the album *One Morning in May* (Rounder 0003), released in October 1971. Recorded by Hartley Severns of Hartley, Alward, and Lyons Audiographics in March-May of 1975.

Produced by the Rounder Collective.

*Joe Val* – mandolin and vocal; *Herb Applin* – guitar and vocal; *Bob French* – banjo and vocal; *Bob Tidwell* – bass.



“Who Do You Love?”

**GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS**

(E. McDaniel/Arc Music BMI) 4:20

From the album *Move It On Over* (Rounder 3024), released in October 1978.

Recorded by John Nagy at Dimension Sound, Boston MA. Produced by George Thorogood, Ken Irwin, and John Nagy.

*George Thorogood* – guitars and vocal; *Jeff Simon* – drums; *Billy Blough* – bass; *Uncle Meat Pennington* – tambourine and maracas.

## *the* **ROUNDER RECORDS** *story: the 1980s*

"After George Thorogood's success, every blues artist in the world thought we had the magic touch and approached us about doing an album," recalls Rounder producer Scott Billington. Thorogood's second Rounder album, 1979's *Move It on Over*, had cracked the top 40 on Billboard's pop charts and earned a gold record, as did his fourth album, *Bad to the Bone*, which Rounder had recorded before working out a deal to turn the tapes over to EMI. Suddenly musicians were approaching the tiny Massachusetts company as much for its industry clout as for its artistic integrity. It was a mind-twisting turn of events.

The integrity still mattered, however, and Rounder picked its blues projects carefully. Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown was a logical choice, for he was as eclectic as the label itself. He was born in West Louisiana and raised in East Texas, playing the Cajun and country tunes beloved by his father. It was only when he moved to Houston as a young man that he jumped — literally — into the blues. One night in 1947 at the Bronze Peacock, headliner T-Bone Walker fell ill with an ulcer and was helped off the stage. Brown leapt from his seat and started playing every boogie riff he knew, and by the end of the night, the whooping audience was stuffing money into his shirt and pants. He was quickly signed to Duke-Peacock Records and enjoyed several Gulf Coast hits. But he was too restless to be pigeonholed for long. Soon he was playing jazz and R&B in addition to blues, Cajun, and country; he even pulled out his fiddle at least once in every show. By the 1970s, he was based in Nashville, backing soul singers on the TV show, *The!!!Beat*, and eventually joining country star Roy Clark on *Hee Haw*. "I don't like to be listening to the same old stuff all the time," he explained. "I can't stand up on a bandstand and play the same style of music every night.... I see all these other guitarists, and they're stuck in the same mud hole getting nowhere."

As producer, Scott Billington wrested Brown out of his current comfort zone

and thrust him back in front of a big horn band. Enlisting some of the top horn men in New Orleans, including 1950s R&B studio legend and modern jazz saxophonist Alvin "Red" Tyler, Billington and co-producer Jim Bateman pushed Brown to tackle some classic Texas blues numbers, including Albert Collins' "Frosty." The galvanizing results revitalized Brown's career and even won the album, *Alright Again!*, the 1982 Grammy Award for Best Traditional Blues Recording. That gold statuette, Rounder's first, bolstered the label's reputation almost as much as Thorogood's sales numbers. "It's the biggest prize the record industry has," Billington points out, "and it gives you a legitimacy in some people's eyes. They look at you and say, 'OK, these guys can do the job; they won a Grammy.'" Soon there were even more musicians knocking on Rounder's door.

One of them was Johnny Copeland, another Texas bluesman who had lapsed into semi-obscurity after a promising start. As Billington had with Brown, producer Dan Doyle resuscitated Copeland's career by putting him in front of a jazzy horn band. Instead of using New Orleans veterans, however, Doyle hired some of the top avant-garde jazzers in New York, including saxophonists Arthur Blythe, George Adams, and Byard Lancaster. As you can hear on "Everybody Wants a Piece of Me" from that 1981 release, the horn players aren't content to merely repeat the same riff but toy with the voicings behind Copeland's stinging solos to make things more interesting. It worked; Copeland's career revived, and that made possible the eventual emergence of his Harlem daughter Shemekia as a major blues singer.

Brown's album provided Rounder with an entrée into the New Orleans music community just as that scene was starting to recapture national attention. The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, begun in 1970 as a showcase for local talent, was becoming the favorite annual destination for roots-music lovers the world over. Inside the festival's white tents and on the grass before the outdoor stages, out-of-towners were discovering pianists with a carnival syncopation, horn players that straddled jazz

and blues, brass bands that built dizzying chords without guitar or piano, survivors of the city's golden age of R&B, and Mardi Gras Indians swallowed up in giant costumes of plumes and beads. Rounder documented it all.

The label snapped up a 1972 tape (produced by festival founder Quint Davis) of the city's most famous pianist, Professor Longhair (aka Henry Roeland Byrd). *House Party New Orleans Style*, which won a Grammy for Best Traditional Blues Album, was highlighted by "Tipitina," a song so famous that the city's best nightclub was named after it. Billington took Fess's most gifted, most troubled heir, James Booker, into the studio for a new session. "He was probably the only person I've ever worked with that I thought was fairly a genius," the producer declares. "His technique was as good as Artur Rubinstein or any classical pianist; sometimes even piano players are surprised to learn it's only one piano player on his records. But he was also one of the most tragically flawed musicians New Orleans has ever produced. Three weeks before we were to go into the studio, he had some kind of breakdown and ended up in Baptist Hospital. Booker went into this state of withdrawal and didn't want to play any of the songs we'd picked out; he didn't even want to talk to anyone. I was worried that I'd have to go back to Boston and explain why I'd spent \$8,000 without coming up with any usable tracks. On the third day of our otherwise fruitless sessions, I went back into the studio to see if I had any salvageable music and Booker was there in the door, ready to go, and we cut all that stuff that's on the *Classified* album. I was so relieved I had something that I gave him a check. In the middle of playing "Tipitina" he asked, 'When does the bank close?' Someone said, 'Three o'clock'; he slammed the piano shut, was out the door and no one saw him for weeks."

Jazzfest was also a showcase for music from rural South Louisiana, both the Cajun of the French-American community and the zydeco of the African-American community. Beausoleil, a Cajun band led by Michael Doucet, demonstrated how closely related the two genres were on Michael's composition, "Zydeco Gris-Gris."

Michael, after all, had studied not only with Cajun fiddlers like Dennis McGee but also with Creole fiddlers like Canray Fontenot. Buckwheat Zydeco (aka Stanley Dural) had led an R&B band until he was drafted to be a keyboardist in the band led by Clifton Chenier, the universally acknowledged King of Zydeco. Buckwheat learned to play zydeco's lead instrument, the accordion, but he never forgot his R&B roots, as one can hear on his adaptation of "Ya Ya," originally a hit for New Orleans' Lee Dorsey.

The accordion was also the lead instrument in Tex-Mex conjunto music, and Rounder jumped into that community too. Santiago Jiménez had been the godfather of the genre, but his son Flaco modernized that sound through his collaborations with Doug Sahm, Ry Cooder, Dr. John, and Los Lobos. But Flaco never lost touch with his roots in the barrios of West San Antonio, as he proves on his father's composition, "Viva Seguin." Flaco, his brother Santiago Jr., and Steve Jordan (the "Conjunto Jimi Hendrix") popularized the Tex-Mex sound and mesmerized a punk-rocker from Denton, Texas, named Carl Finch. Finch picked up the accordion, started playing conjunto polkas and soon branched out to play Polish and Czech polkas, cha chas, and mazurkas as well. His band Brave Combo soon learned that audiences were starving for joyful dance music like the polka standard "Happy Wanderer" and continue to enjoy a long career feeding that hunger.

Rounder hadn't abandoned the artists from its first decade. Rory Block, a member of the Woodstock Mountains Revue, recorded the original blues "Got To Have You Be My Man" for one of her 13 solo albums on Rounder. Tony Rice, who had sung two Gordon Lightfoot songs on 1975's *J. D. Crowe & The New South*, chose another as the title track of his 1984 solo album, *Cold on the Shoulder*. "It was a great repertoire that no one else was doing," Irwin comments, "in the same way that no one was doing Dylan songs till Joan Baez and Judy Collins did those songs totally differently and made them work. That's what Tony did with those Lightfoot songs, which were almost bluegrass anyway." Earlier, in 1980, Rice had gone into the studio to make

another solo record with Crowe, Phillips, Doyle Lawson, and Bobby Hicks but soon realized it was morphing into a collective-band project with everyone making equal contributions. "My Blue Ridge Cabin Home," attributed to Earl Scruggs' wife Louise Certain, is from the resulting record, *The Bluegrass Album*. It was supposed to be a one-off project, but the Bluegrass Album approach proved so popular that six albums have appeared so far under that name.

Rice had been replaced in Crowe's band by Keith Whitley, Ricky Skaggs' childhood friend from East Kentucky. Whitley had left Ralph Stanley's band because he wanted to sing more mainstream country, which Crowe had already integrated into his newgrass repertoire. Crowe turned over his 1982 recording session to his young protégé, hiring a Nashville rhythm section to provide a honky-tonk thump to songs like Lefty Frizzell's "I Never Go Around Mirrors." The arrangement provided the blueprint for all of Whitley's later country hits; he would even recut "I Never Go Around Mirrors" for RCA. Keith was having some problems and missing dates so J.D., who was originally going to have the album come out under Keith's name, changed his mind and had it released as a JD Crowe and the New South album. When Keith was ready to pursue a country career, Ken Irwin says, "It made sense for him to sign with RCA; we weren't prepared to deal with that world. Just like with George Thorogood, we couldn't see ourselves holding Keith back; we wanted to help him have the career he deserved. We made an agreement with RCA where we got a percentage, so it worked out for everybody." Years later, J.D. and engineer Steve Chandler went back into the studio, overdubbed some parts, and remixed the album adding a few songs which Keith had cut for Rounder as demos to pitch to major labels but which had never been released.

In 1984 Hazel Dickens recorded the greatest of her many great songs: "Mama's Hand." With remarkable detail, she conjured up the day in 1954 when she boarded the Greyhound bus that would take her from West Virginia to Baltimore: "I said

goodbye to that plain little mining town/ With just a few old clothes that had made the rounds./ [But] It was hard to let go of mama's hand." "I remember her being sad," Dickens recalled, "and she said, 'Surely you're not going before supper,' and I said, 'I have to catch my bus.' She would have liked me to stay, but she knew there was nothing there for me. She'd seen all her other children go off to work or get married, so she knew she had to let go." When Lynn Morris re-recorded the song for Rounder in 1995, it topped the bluegrass charts and was voted the IBMA's Song of the Year.

Irwin had asked Tony Trischka to back up Dickens on the soundtrack for the Barbara Kopple movie, *Harlan County USA*, but the banjoist said, "Ooh, I'm going to be out of a town, but I have a 16-year-old student named Béla." "That's three strikes right there —16, student and 'Béla,'" Irwin remembers thinking. "But he was really good." Fleck eventually recorded seven solo albums as well as band projects with Spectrum and New Grass Revival for Rounder before going on to fame and fortune at Warner Bros. and Columbia. His banjo instrumental "Whitewater," featuring Rice, Bush, Douglas, Stuart Duncan, and Mark Schatz, is from the solo album *Drive*. Fleck eventually returned to Rounder in 2009 to release a Flecktones Christmas album and the soundtrack to his African-music documentary, *Throw Down Your Heart*. "We learned early on that losing someone to another label is not the end of the world," Rounder founder Marian Leighton Levy says. "It's not necessarily the last time you will work with them. We became fairly philosophical about it, unlike some people who go, 'I'll never work with that person again.' You don't want to burn bridges. If someone comes along and offers a lot more money than we as an underfunded label can, you wish them well and hope they'll come back someday."

Rounder was well aware that its fan base was as interested in folk singer-songwriters as in bluegrass and Cajun bands, but the label left that corner of the roots-music world in the hands of labels such as Philo and Flying Fish (founded by

ex-Rounder producer Bruce Kaplan), both distributed by Rounder. But when those two labels went out of business, Rounder felt an obligation to take them over to protect their catalogues. And once they had these labels on their hands, it made sense to sign new singer-songwriters. One of the most notable was Nanci Griffith, whose "Once in a Very Blue Moon," co-written by Pat Alger of the Woodstock Mountains Revue, provided the template for her long career at MCA, though she did return to Rounder in 2006. One of her early admirers, Lyle Lovett, sings harmony on the track. Another key signing was John McCutcheon, who turned to the original folk singer-songwriter, Woody Guthrie, for the children's number "Howjadoo." Rounder eventually reissued Guthrie's Library of Congress recordings on CD, and developed an ongoing relationship with Woody Guthrie Publications, shepherded by Woody's daughter Nora.

As the world's premier string-band label, it was logical — if only in retrospect — for Rounder to move into Klezmer, the Jewish Diaspora folk music that often featured fiddle, banjo, string bass, and accordion. The song "A Freylekhe Nakht in Fan Eydn" came from the counter-programming holiday album, *Oy Chanukah!* and featured jazz clarinetist Don Byron. It seemed just as logical to embrace the cowboy-music revival. Doug Green was a musicologist who had written liner notes for Rounder and essays for the Country Music Hall of Fame, when he decided to put his love for Hollywood cowboy music into action. He formed a group called Riders in the Sky, which always maintained the difficult balance between poking fun and genuine affection, as one can hear on their original tune, "Cowboy Jubilee."

Inasmuch as New Orleans is as much a Caribbean city as an American one, it also made sense for Rounder to move into reggae as well. "The reggae didn't seem out of place from everything else we were doing," Nowlin insists. "It was very traditional, but it also had that edge. It had that African influence like a lot of Southern American music, and a lot of reggae musicians listened to WLAC from Nashville." "Babylon's Big Dog" comes from Culture, one of the greatest reggae vocal groups of all time.

As a label named in part after the Holy Modal Rounders, Rounder was always willing to give a fair hearing to the kind of eccentrics other labels dismissed. Ted Hawkins, for example, was a street singer in Venice, California. Unlike most strumming buskers, though, he didn't sound like Pete Seeger or Mississippi John Hurt or Jimmy Buffett; he sounded like Sam Cooke — a classic, knockout soul singer, all alone with an acoustic guitar. Hawkins had tastes as broad as Gatemouth Brown; he recorded songs by everyone from Webb Pierce to Curtis Mayfield and Paul Simon. And Hawkins' many originals, including the title track of his *Watch Your Step* album, filtered all those elements through his rough-and-tumble life on the street. Odder still was Jonathan Richman, the leader of Boston's legendary rock'n'roll band, the Modern Lovers. Since his early apprenticeship with Lou Reed, Richman had steadily peeled away the noise and hipness from rock music to create not a childlike simplicity but rather a childlike surrealism. On "New Kind of Neighborhood" from the album *Modern Lovers 88*, he finds the no man's land between foolery and sincerity. NRBQ also subverted the rock paradigm with wild, improvisatory live shows that proceeded without set lists, alternating raucous noise with pretty harmonies, and hillbilly novelty numbers, with irresistibly hooky pop songs like "Me and the Boys," which Bonnie Raitt later recorded. Al Anderson went on to write hits for Carlene Carter; Joey Spampinato played with Keith Richards and married Skeeter Davis, and Terry Adams annotated Thelonious Monk albums.

Another rock'n'roll wild card, Sleepy LaBeef, entered the Rounder sphere only because his bus caught fire on the nearby Maine Turnpike. "He ended up living at Alan's Truck Stop and playing at the truck stop's Fifth Wheel Room for the next three years," Billington explains. "Sleepy, who had been the last person to record for Sun Records, had an enormous catalogue of songs, and those shows were stream-of-consciousness rock'n'roll and rockabilly; he might go off for an hour of Ernest Tubb songs or an hour of Little Richard songs. He would go into this other state

when he'd take on a different voice and bend his whole guitar neck to bend notes. 'Electricity' represents how Sleepy got into that same state at the studio where George Thorogood cut his first Rounder records."

Rounder got louder in the '80s but it also got weirder. It may have won its first two Grammys, but it also released albums by fiddling bluesmen, singing cowboys, squeezebox Creoles, street buskers, and truck-stop bands. No one was going to confuse it with MCA.



The Rounder crew in the Cambridge warehouse, 1983

## 198 S



### "Frosty" / **CLARENCE GATEMOUTH BROWN**

(Albert Collins/Universal Songs of Polygram, BMI) 3:46

From the album *Alright Again!* (Rounder 2028), released November 1981. Recorded by David Farrell at Studio In the Country, Bogalusa LA, assisted by Eugene Foster, from June 2 – 8, 1981.

Produced by Jim Bateman and Scott Billington. A Real Records Production.

*Clarence Gatemouth Brown* – vocal and guitar; *Larry Sieberth* – piano; *David "Fingers" Fender* – Hammond organ and piano; *Red Lane* – rhythm guitar; *Myron Dove* – bass; *Lloyd Herrman* – drums; *Bill "Foots" Samuel* – alto saxophone; *Alvin "Red" Tyler* – tenor saxophone; *Joe "Champagne" Sunseri* – baritone saxophone; *Stanton Davis Jr.* – trumpet; *Jim McMillen* – trombone.  
Horns arranged by *Joe Sunseri*.



“Watch Your Step” / **TED HAWKINS**

(Theodore Hawkins Jr./Bug Music o/b/o Joliet Music, BMI) 2:13

An acoustic version of the track on the album *Watch Your Step* (Rounder 2024), released June 1982. Recorded at a little radio studio on Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles by Bill Harris. Produced by Bruce Bromberg for Joliet Productions.

*Ted Hawkins* – vocal and guitar.

“New Kind of Neighborhood” / **JONATHAN RICHMAN**

(Jonathan Richman/Rockin’ Leprechaun Music ASCAP) 2:43

From the album *Modern Lovers* 88 (Rounder 9014), released November 1987. Recorded at the Bennett House, Grass Valley CA by Paul Emery.

*Jonathan Richman* – guitar and lead vocal; *Brennan Totten* – guitar and vocal; *Johnny Avila* – drum and vocal.

“I Never Go Around Mirrors” / **KEITH WHITLEY**

(Lefty Frizzell & Sanger Shaffer/Sony-ATV Acuff Rose, BMI & APRS, BMI) 3:17

From the album *Somewhere Between* by J.D. Crowe and the New South (Rounder 0153), released August 1982. Recorded by Steve Chandler at Bull Run Studios, Nashville. Mixed by J.D. Crowe and Steve Chandler at Mach 1 Studios, Central City, KY.

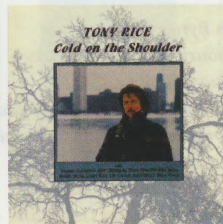
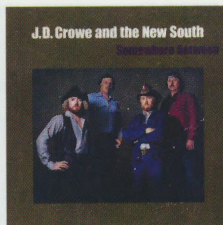
*Keith Whitley* – lead vocal, rhythm guitar;  
*J.D. Crowe* – banjo, rhythm guitar, baritone vocal;  
*Wendy Miller* – mandolin, tenor vocal; *Bobby Slone* – fiddle;  
*Steve Bryant* – electric bass; *Pete Wade* – electric guitar;  
*Doug Jernigan* – steel guitar, Dobro; *Kenny Malone* – drums;  
*Jon Probst* – piano; *The Jordanares* – vocal accompaniment.

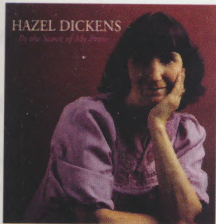
“Cold on the Shoulder” / **TONY RICE**

(Gordon Lightfoot/Moose Music, SOCAN) 2:34

From the album *Cold on the Shoulder* (Rounder 0183), released June 1984. Recorded at Fantasy Studios, Berkeley CA by Bill Wolf in January and April 1983.

*Tony Rice* – guitar and lead vocal; *Jerry Douglas* – Dobro;  
*Todd Phillips* – bass; *Sam Bush* – mandolin;  
*Vassar Clements* – fiddle; *Béla Fleck* – banjo.





**“Mama’s Hand” / HAZEL DICKENS**

(Hazel Dickens/Happy Valley Music BMI) 4:30

From the album *By the Sweat of My Brow* (Rounder 0200), released July 1984. Recorded by Jerry Shook and Colin Walker at The Shook Shack, Nashville.

*Hazel Dickens* – vocal; *Jerry Douglas* – Dobro; *Blaine Sprouse* – fiddle; *Tommy Goldsmith* – guitar; *Roy Huskey* – bass.



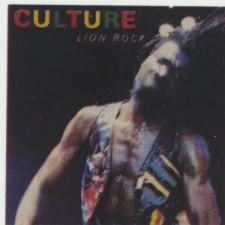
**“A Freylekhe Nakht In Gan Eydn”**

**KLEZMER CONSERVATORY BAND**

(public domain) 1:49

From the album *Oy Chanukah!* (Rounder 3102), released November 1986. Recorded at WGBH Radio, Boston, by Melanie Berson. Produced by Martin Miller.

*Hankus Netsky* – director. *Don Byron* – clarinet; *Judy Bressler* – vocal and tambourine; *Hankus Netsky* – piano and alto saxophone; *Miriam Rabson* – violin; *David Brody* – violin and mandolin; *Robin Miller* – piccolo and flute; *Ingrid Monson* – cornet; *Frank London* – cornet, alto horn; *Merryl Goldberg* – baritone saxophone; *Mark Hamilton* – trombone; *Even Harlan* – piano and accordion; *Steve Netksy* – tenor banjo; *James Guttmann* – bass; *Grant Smith* – drums and percussion.

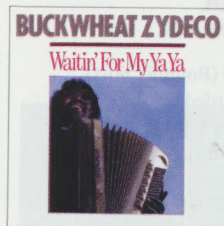


**“Babylon’s Big Dog” / CULTURE**

(Joseph Hill/Happy Valley Music BMI) 3:58

From the album *Lion Rock* (Heartbeat HB-12), released April 1983. Recorded at Dynamic Studios, Aquarius Studio Tuff Gong, and Channel One, Kingston JA by Christopher Daley. Executive producer Peter Bell.

*Joseph Hill* – lead vocal and percussion; *Freddie Fatstring* – lead guitar; *Jah Privie* – rhythm guitar; *Sezz Walker* – bass; *Lewis Daley* – drums; *Vin Morgan* – keyboards; *Evrol Gayle* – trombone; *Sparrow* – trumpet; *Green* – sax. *Joseph Hill, Jah Privie, Vin Morgan* – background vocal.

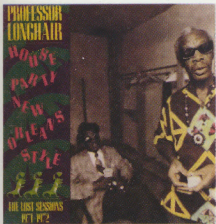


**“Ya Ya” / BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO**

(Robinson-Dorsey-Lewis/EMI Longitude Music, BMI) 3:35

From the album *Waitin’ for My Ya-Ya* (Rounder 2051), released January 1986. Recorded by Gragg Lunsford at Blue Jay Studio, Carlisle MA in April 1985, assisted by Rob Jaczko, Ed Goodreau, Rob Feaster, and Mike Costello. Produced by Scott Billington. A Bee’s Knees Production.

*Stanley “Buckwheat” Dural* – accordion, piano, Elko keyboard, and vocal; *Jimmy Reed* – guitar; *Calvin Landry* – trumpet; *Lee Allen Zeno* – bass and guitar; *Elijah Cudges* – rubboard; *Nat Jolivet* – drums.



“Tipitina” / **PROFESSOR LONGHAIR**

(Roy Byrd/Professor Longhair Music BMI) 4:22

From the album *House Party New Orleans Style* (Rounder 2057), released February 1987. Recorded June 1972 at Ardent Studios, Memphis TN. Mixed by Gragg Lunsford and Scott Billington at Blue Jay Studio, Carlisle MA in September 1986, assisted by Rob Feaster and Mark Tanzer. Produced by Quint Davis.

*Professor Longhair* – piano and vocal; *Snooks Eaglin* – guitar; *Joseph “Zigaboo” Modeliste* – drums; *George Davis* – bass.



“Zydeco gris-gris” / **BEAUSOLEIL**

(Michael Doucet/Flat Town Music BMI) 3:39

From the album *Bayou Boogie* (Rounder 6015), released in January 1987. Recorded by Mark Miller at Master Trak Studio, Crowley LA on September 27, 1985. Mixed by David Farrell and Ken Irwin at Southlake Studio, Metairie LA.

*Michael Doucet* – fiddle, mandolin, vocal; *Errol Verret* – Evangeline and Acadian accordions; *David Doucet* – guitar; *Billy Ware* – percussion; *Tommy Comeaux* – mandolin, rhythm guitar; *Tommy Alesi* – drums; *Russell Keyes* – bass.

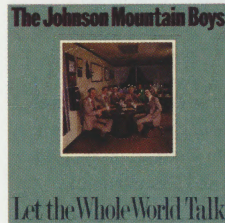


“Cowboy Jubilee” / **RIDERS IN THE SKY**

(Fred LaBour & Woody Paul/Too Slim Music BMI & Buck Music ASCAP) 1:42

From the album *Cowboy Jubilee* (Rounder 0147), released June 1981. Recorded by Todd Cerney at Creative Workshop, Nashville. Produced by Fred LaBour and Woody Paul.

*Ranger Doug* – lead and baritone vocal, rhythm guitar; *Too Slim* – lead vocal, string bass, rhythm guitar, accordion (downwind); *Woody Paul* – lead and tenor vocal, fiddles, gut string guitar, accordion (upwind), harmonica; *Louis Brown* – horns; *Tommy Goldsmith* – electric and acoustic lead guitar; *Kenny Malone* – percussion; *Kayton Roberts* – steel guitar.



“Let the Whole World Talk”

**THE JOHNSON MOUNTAIN BOYS**

(J. D. Miller and J. Fitzmorris/Acuff-Rose Music BMI) 2:42

From the album *Let the Whole World Talk* (Rounder 0225), released May 1987. Recorded at Bias Recorders, Springfield VA by Jim Robeson. Produced by the Johnson Mountain Boys and Ken Irwin; production assistance by Jim Robeson.

*Dudley Connell* – guitar and vocal; *David McLaughlin* – mandolin, fiddle, and vocal; *Eddie Stubbs* – fiddle and vocal; *Richard Underwood* – banjo and vocal; *Marshall Wilborn* – bass; *Ed Ferris* – bass.

“Happy Wanderer” / **BRAVE COMBO**

(F. Moeller & A. Ridge/Warner Chappell Music, BMI) 2:30

From the album *Polkatharsis* (Rounder 9009), released February 1987. Recorded at Omega Audio, Dallas, Texas, engineered by Phil York. Produced by Brave Combo.

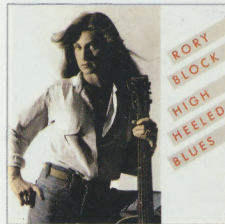
*Bubba Hernandez* – bass; *Mitch Marine* – drums; *Carl Finch* – guitar, accordion; *Jeffrey Barnes* – woodwinds.

“Classified” / **JAMES BOOKER**

(James Booker/Bookends Publishing, BMI) 3:16

From the album *Classified* (Rounder 2036), released April 1983. Recorded by Jay Gallagher at Ultrasonic Studios, New Orleans LA from October 18-20, 1982. Produced by Scott Billington and John Parsons.

*James Booker* – piano and vocal.

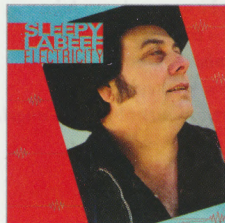


“Got To Have You Be My Man” / **RORY BLOCK**

(Rory Block/Happy Valley Music BMI) 2:22

From the album *High Heeled Blues* (Rounder 3061), released December 1981. Recorded by Shep Siegel at Bearsville, Woodstock, New York. Produced by Roy Block and John Sebastian.

*Rory Block* – vocal and guitar.

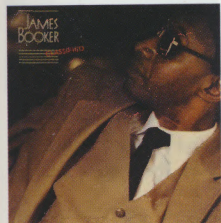
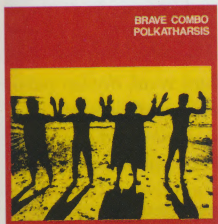


“Electricity” / **SLEEPY LABEEF**

(Jimmy Murphy/Acuff-Rose BMI) 2:20

From the album *Electricity* (Rounder 3070), released May 1981. Recorded by Paul Mufson at Dimension Sound, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts and Blue Jay Studio, Carlisle, Massachusetts in February 1982. Mixed by Paul Mufson, Scott Billington, and Sleepy LaBeef at The Mixing Lab. Produced by Scott Billington.

*Sleepy LaBeef* – vocal, electric and acoustic guitars, all guitar solos; *Harry King* – piano; *Bobby Keyes* – guitar; *Russ Keyes* – bass; *Rick Nelson* – drums.





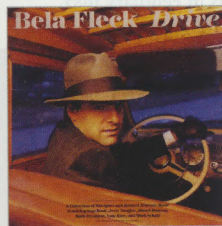
“Everybody Wants A Piece of Me”

**JOHNNY COPELAND**

(Johnny Copeland/Happy Valley Music, BMI) 2:55

From the album *Copeland Special* (Rounder 2025), released May 1981. Recorded and mixed at Blank Tapes, New York City by Joe Arlotta, Bob Blank, and Paul Mufson. Produced by Dan Doyle.

*Johnny Copeland* – guitar and vocal; *George Adams* – saxophone; *Arthur Blythe* – saxophone; *Bayard Lancaster* – saxophone; *Joe Rigby* – saxophone; *John Pratt* – trumpet; *Yusef Yancey* – trumpet; *Garrett List* – trombone; *Bill Ohashi* – trombone; *John Leibman* – guitar; *Ken Vangel* – piano; *Don Whitcomb* – bass; *Candy McDonald* – drums; Arrangement by *Ken Vangel*.



“Whitewater” / **BÉLA FLECK**

(Béla Fleck/Bug Music o/b/o Fleck Music BMI) 3:10

From the album *Drive* (Rounder 0255), released June 1988. Recorded by Bil VornDick at Nashville Sound Connection. Produced by Béla Fleck.

*Béla Fleck* – banjo; *Sam Bush* – mandolin; *Jerry Douglas* – Dobro; *Stuart Duncan* – fiddle; *Tony Rice* – guitar; *Mark Schatz* – bass.



“Once In A Very Blue Moon”

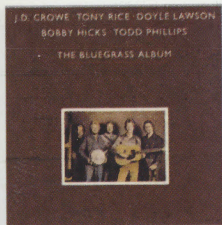
**NANCI GRIFFITH**

(Patrick Alger and Eugene Levine/Michael H. Goldsen Inc, ASCAP – Universal Polygram Publishing, ASCAP) 2:34

From the album *Once In A Very Blue Moon* (Philo 1096), released February 1985. Recorded at Jack Clement’s Cowboy Arms Hotel and Recording Spa, Nashville TN from June 26-July 2, 1984 by Jack “Stack-A-Track” Grochmal.

Produced by Jim Rooney and Nanci Griffith for Griffmill/Stack-A-Rooney Productions. Executive producer: Wayne R. Miller.

*Nanci Griffith* – acoustic guitar, lead and harmony vocal; *Pat Alger* – acoustic guitar and Mark Howard’s high-string guitar; *John Catchings* – cello; *Phillip Donnelly* – electric guitar; *Stephen Doster* – acoustic and electric guitar; *Béla Fleck* – banjo; *Denice Franke* – harmony vocal; *Mark Howard* – acoustic rhythm guitar and high-string guitar; *Roy Huskey Jr.* – upright bass; *Lyle Lovett* – harmony vocal; *Kenny Malone* – percussion; *Mark O’Connor* – piccolo mandolin; mandolin, fiddle, mandola; *Ralph Vitello* – piano.



“My Blue Ridge Cabin Home”

**BLUEGRASS ALBUM BAND**

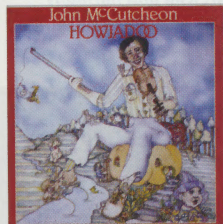
(Louise Certain & Gladys Stacey/Golden West Melodies BMI)  
3:09

From the album *The Bluegrass Album* (Rounder 0140), released July 1981. Recorded and mixed by Bill Wolf at 1750 Arch Studios, Berkeley CA September 22-24, 1980.

*J.D. Crowe* – banjo, baritone vocal;

*Bobby Hicks* – fiddle, bass vocal; *Doyle Lawson* – mandolin, tenor vocal; *Todd Phillips* – bass;

*Tony Rice* – guitar, lead vocal.



“Howjadoo” / **JOHN McCUTCHEON**

(Woody Guthrie/Ludlow Music BMI) 2:41

From the album *Howjadoo* (Rounder 8009), released March 1984. Recorded by Bill McElroy at Biase Recorders, Springfield, Virginia. Mixed by Bill McElroy, Paul Reisler, and John McCutcheon. Produced by Paul Reisler.

*John McCutcheon* – banjo and vocal;

*Lorraine Duisit* – guitar; *Ralph Gordon* – bass.

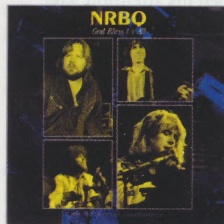


“Viva Seguin” / **FLACO JIMÉNEZ**

(Santiago Jiménez/APRS, BMI) 2:18

From the album *Arriba El Norte* (Rounder 6032), released October 1989. Recorded by DLB Records, San Antonio TX.

*Flaco Jiménez* – accordion. Other musicians not known.



“Me and the Boys” / **NRBO**

(T. Adams/Music Sales ASCAP) 3:25

From the album *God Bless Us All* (Rounder 3018), released December 1987. Recorded live at Lupo's Heartbreak Hotel, Providence RI on April 18, 1987 by Bill Scheniman. Assistant engineers: Robert DeMuth, Ross Humphrey. Mixed at Blue Jay Recording, Carlisle MA. Assistant engineers for mixing: Bob Jaczko, Craig Winselberg. Produced by Terry Adams, Joey Spampinato, and Bill Scheniman.

*Terry Adams* – keyboards, vocal; *Joey Spampinato* – bass, vocal; *Al Anderson* – guitar, vocal;

*Tom Ardolino* – drums. *The Whole Wheat Horns*: *Jim Bob Hochanadel* – tenor and baritone saxophone; *Donn Adams* – trombone.

## the **ROUNDER RECORDS** story: the 1990s

Even in the late '80s, when Rounder was being deluged by submissions, Ken Irwin made it a point of honor to listen to every tape sent to the company. "If it was a nice day," he recalls, "I'd sit on top of our garage with a hat, some water, a cassette player and my three-carbon memo pad where I could write, 'Thank you for thinking of us.' One day I listened to a cassette from Classified Grass, a bluegrass group in Illinois. The first three songs were just sort of OK, and I might have ejected the tape. But it was nice out, so I listened to the fourth song and that changed everything."

The fourth song featured a lead vocal by the band's 13-year-old fiddler and her soprano's piercing purity and feeling immediately grabbed his attention. Her name was Alison Krauss; she played fiddle in two different bands but was the lead singer in neither. Within a week Irwin had obtained another tape with Krauss singing five lead vocals. A short while later he called Krauss at her home in Urbana, Illinois, and said, "I have two pieces of news for you. First, you've been booked for the Newport Folk Festival." "What's that?" the young girl asked. Irwin explained and plowed on, "Second, we want to do your record." Finally Krauss lost her composure and started shouting, "Mother! Mother!"

Irwin may have seen her all along as a singer, but her early publicity stressed her victories at assorted fiddle championships and one of her first tours was the National Council for the Arts' 1988 Fiddle Tour with Kenny Baker, Michael Doucet, and Joe Cormier. The critics spotted her true potential, though; in a review of her 1987 debut album, *Too Late To Cry*, the Washington Post cited Krauss's "lovely, expressive country voice; ... it's as if Nanci Griffith could back up her vocals with fiddle solos." As she continued to release albums for Rounder, both as a solo artist and as leader of the Union Station bluegrass band, the emphasis shifted more and more to her singing. "I still love playing the fiddle," she claimed, "but it's amazing

what a song lyric can do. When someone tells you, 'That song is my life,' you understand how important vocals are."

As important as her fiddling and singing were, Krauss was just as important as a talent scout for new bluegrass songwriters — John Pennell, Nelson Mandrell, Sidney Cox, Ron Block, R.L. Castleman, and Mark Simos — reinvigorating a field that had suffered from a lack of strong new material. "There are a lot of songs I won't sing, because they're so predictable," she explained. "You know what the next line is before the singer sings it or you know what the whole song is about after the first line. Or there's a word that sticks out, and you say, 'I can't sing that.' When you come across a songwriter like John or Sidney, who's so fresh and believable, it's like finding a gold mine." Krauss was so taken with Sidney Cox's whole family, a bluegrass-gospel band from Louisiana, that she ended up producing four of their albums. *I Know Who Holds Tomorrow* was credited to Alison Krauss & the Cox Family because of her lead vocals on hymns like Block's "In the Palm of Your Hand."

That song was part of a 1995 retrospective, *Now That I've Found You*, that collected one song apiece from Krauss's five Rounder albums, her contributions to albums by Jerry Douglas and Tony Furtado, and her track on *Keith Whitley: A Tribute Album*. The three previously-unreleased songs included a spellbinding remake of "Baby, Now That I've Found You," a 1967 hit for the pop-rock band the Foundations. That song broke into the top-50 on the country singles charts, and the Whitley song, "When You Say Nothing At All," went to #3. The album as a whole hit #13 on the pop charts and #2 on the country charts and was eventually certified double-platinum (sales of two million or more). The title track won a Grammy and a CMA Award, just one of four CMA Awards she won that year, and Krauss was named Female Vocalist and Entertainer of the Year at the IBMA Awards. For Rounder, it was George Thorogood all over again. Every label in Nashville came sniffing around to see if they could lure Krauss away from Rounder, but she was adamant: "If it ain't broke, why fix it?"

If Rounder could give her double-platinum sales, complete artistic freedom, and a long-term commitment, how could another label improve on that?

Even more than J.D. Crowe had a decade earlier, Krauss nudged the emphasis in bluegrass from flashy picking and three-part harmonies to songwriter and lead singing, and one of the main beneficiaries was James King, a former singer from Ralph Stanley & the Clinch Mountain Boys. "Some people think the Stanley Brothers were morbid," King said in 1999, "but I know how they got that way. They were raised up there on that mountain, Smith Mountain, and it gets lonesome up there. It's a hard life; some folks die young; it's a long ways between houses, and when that wind starts whistling across those mountaintops, it's easy to sound morbid." You can hear that whistling wind in King's big, brawny voice, especially on his #1 bluegrass hit, "Bed by the Window," a carefully-crafted story about two dying men. King still liked those three-part harmonies, though, and when he sang with the Johnson Mountain Boys' Dudley Connell and the Lonesome River Band's Don Rigsby at Doyle Lawson's Bluegrass Festival, "the hairs stood up all over my head," Irwin remembers. "Maybe that's where I lost it all. But I knew I had to document those trio harmonies." To do so he formed an all-star band called Longview, named after the studio where the three singers recorded songs like "High Lonesome," which was both.

Krauss's example led to a new emphasis on songwriting not just in bluegrass but in everything Rounder recorded, it seemed. Songwriting had always been the main reason for Philo Records' existence, and after Rounder took over the label, Philo continued to attract some of the most literate musicians around. One of the best was New Hampshire's Bill Morrissey, whose lyrics were so concise and evocative in their description and dialogue that it surprised no one when Knopf published his first novel, *Edson*, in 1996. But Morrissey could create equally memorable characters in the three minutes it took a song such as "Birches" to unfold. It tells you everything you need to know about a troubled marriage in a brief discussion about firewood.

Another crucial discovery was Indiana's Carrie Newcomer, who measured the balance between hope and despair in songs such as "Only One Shoe," from her 1994 Philo debut, *An Angel at My Shoulder*.

Rounder had documented Texas's blues and conjunto traditions in the '80s, but now the label turned toward the state's equally important tradition of singer-songwriters such as Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark. There were no heirs to that legacy worthier than the Flatlanders, a trio of friends from the West Texas cotton center of Lubbock, hometown to Buddy Holly and Waylon Jennings. Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Joe Ely, and Butch Hancock decided to form the Flatlanders after Ely picked up a hitch-hiking Van Zandt outside Lubbock and received an LP as a thank-you gift. The three friends set out to write songs as literate as Van Zandt's but as vigorous as the records by Holly and Jennings. Rounder finally liberated the Flatlanders' legendary, unreleased debut album and also issued two solo albums by Ely and two more by Gilmore, including *One Endless Night*, which was co-produced by Buddy Miller. Miller had his regular employer, Emmylou Harris, sing harmony on the title track in a voice as high and pure as Gilmore's own. Tish Hinojosa managed to bridge the Texas traditions exemplified by Van Zandt and by Flaco Jiménez with Tex-Mex story songs such as "Something in the Rain," which exposes the plight of migrant workers bombarded by pesticides.

Just up the Gulf Coast, in South Louisiana, Rounder continued to record Cajun artists such as guitarist D.L. Menard, accordionist Eddie LeJeune, Balfa Troubadours, and Jo-El Sonnier. In 1992 Irwin created *Le Trio Cadien* by putting together guitarist Menard, accordionist LeJeune, and fiddler Ken Smith for an album of traditional two steps and waltzes such as "Valse de Kaplan." Rounder was even busier in the zydeco realm where the label recorded Boozoo Chavis, Chris Ardoin, Nathan & the Zydeco Cha Chas, John Delafosse, and his son Geno Delafosse. But the biggest zydeco star of the '90s was Beau Jocque. "He was a giant man who made very



rough, primitive music,” remembers producer Scott Billington, “but it turned out he was pretty sophisticated, as he transformed zydeco by bringing in influences of his favorite music by War, Santana, and Earth, Wind & Fire. ‘Give Him Cornbread’ was a monster hit in South Louisiana; every radio station, even pop stations, were playing it. It had drummer Steve Charlot yelping in the background, and it had that huge Caribbean bottom to it. I said if we’re going to have that Caribbean rhythm, let’s mix it so everyone can feel it.”

Further east in Louisiana, Rounder continued to document the wild and wonderful permutations of New Orleans R&B. The city was willing to have a parade for any occasion, it seemed, and those parades always featured brass bands. But it took the Dirty Dozen Brass Band to prove that the format could handle modern jazz and soul numbers. The Dozen, who released a live album on Rounder, inspired dozens of local teenagers to pick up trumpets, tubas, saxophones, trombones, and snare drums to add funk and hip-hop flavors to the mix. The best of those young outfits was the ReBirth Brass Band, featuring a very young Kermit Ruffins before his solo success and stardom on TV’s *Treme*. ReBirth is represented here by their signature, sing-along party song, “Do Whatcha Wanna.” Another indigenous feature of many New Orleans parades and festivals are the Mardi Gras Indians, who seem to double in size when they pull on their hand-sewn suits of feathers and beads. They march through the streets, banging on hand percussion and chanting songs that have become New Orleans standards: “Iko Iko,” “Brother John,” and “Hey Pocky Way.” One of the most famous tribes is the Wild Magnolias, led by Big Chief Bo Dollis, who reworked Al Johnson’s 1960 Mardi Gras hit, “Carnival Time,” as an Indian tune. George Porter Jr., an original member of the legendary Meters before making a solo album for Rounder, played bass on the album.

The songs that New Orleans’ Irma Thomas recorded with producer Allen Toussaint in the early ‘60s were so striking that they were closely copied by Otis

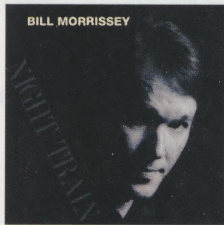
Redding (who turned “Rain in My Heart” into “Pain in My Heart”) and by the Rolling Stones (“Time Is on My Side”). Later in the ‘60s, New Orleans’ Johnny Adams, the “Tan Canary,” made similarly significant singles with the country-tinged “Release Me” and “Reconsider Me.” “When you bring into the studio singers who have made such an impression on American music, you have to ask yourself, ‘What do we do next?’” admits producer Billington. “The secret, ultimately, comes down to the songs.” It was Brad Paul, Rounder’s head of promotion, who had the idea of putting Thomas together in the studio with two of her biggest fans, Marcia Ball and Tracy Nelson, after hearing the three singers harmonizing at a New Orleans club. Billington brought in quality songs, including “Sing It” by Louisiana songwriter David Egan, and the whole thing clicked. Billington also convinced Adams to devote a whole album to songs by Ray Charles’s favorite songwriter, Percy Mayfield, and another to the Brill Building’s resident bluesman, Doc Pomus. On Pomus’s “There Will Always Be One More Time,” Adams’ amazing tenor is backed by co-producer and keyboardist Dr. John and by guitarist Duke Robillard. “At the end of his life, Johnny stopped thinking of his voice as a hustle and he realized that people appreciated him as an artist,” Billington notes. “In all my years at Rounder, that may be the thing I’m most proud of.”

Robillard wasn’t the only roots-music star to emerge from Rhode Island’s Roomful of Blues. The band also produced guitarist Ronnie Earl (three solo albums on Rounder), saxophonist Greg Piccolo, singer Lou Ann Barton, singer Sugar Ray Norcia, and keyboardist Ron Levy (two solo albums on Rounder). The latter changed Rounder founder Marian Leighton into Marian Levy and became head of Rounder’s Bullseye imprint. But Roomful continued despite all those losses without losing its status as the top modern-day example of the jump-blues sound of Louis Jordan, Big Joe Turner, and Wynonie Harris. The band’s secret is its tight, punchy, four-man horn section, as one can hear on the 1996 recording, “Standing Here at

the Crossroads.” Meanwhile Levy tackled the challenge of producing a new record for Charles Brown, who had been so good for so long that his 1945 hit “Driftin’ Blues” had inspired a young Ray Charles. Recently rediscovered by Bonnie Raitt, Brown needed a strong new record to take advantage of the renewed interest. “We didn’t want him to go in and just go over his sound from the ‘40s,” Marian Levy recalls. “We wanted to get him enthused again, and Ron found musicians good enough to get him excited.” The musicians on “A Virus Called the Blues” included Dr. John on organ and duet vocals.

Something similar happened when Billington produced a 1997 album for Virginia’s Ruth Brown, “Miss Rhythm,” who had been Atlantic Records’ best-selling artist in the early ‘50s. Billington backed her with Robillard and four jazz musicians with ties to New Orleans’ Wynton Marsalis: drummer Herlin Riley, kid brother Delfeayo Marsalis, and saxophonists Victor Goines and Wes Anderson. It worked, for Brown seemed to recover her youth on a spirited version of Ivory Joe Hunter’s “False Friend Blues,” featuring guest guitarist Gatemouth Brown. Like Charles and Ruth Brown, Wilson Pickett was an R&B singer whose hits were all in his past when producer Jon Tiven took him into a New York studio in 1999. Tiven is a fine songwriter, though, and the band included Living Colour bassist Muzz Skillings and *Highway 61 Revisited* keyboardist Paul Griffin, and “It’s Harder Now” sparked one of “The Wicked Pickett’s” best late-career performances.

Being a gifted singer or instrumentalist is not enough to make a great record. Such a talent, whether it’s a 13 year-old fiddler from Illinois or a 69-year-old ex-star from Virginia, has to be linked with the right song and the right band. Lining up those three components just right can be elusive, but it became easier for Rounder as they expanded their songwriting contacts to include Sidney Cox, Bill Morrissey, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, David Egan, Doc Pomus, Charles Brown, and Jon Tiven. And it had been that young fiddler who had shown them the way.



“Birches” / **BILL MORRISSEY**

(Bill Morrissey/Dry Fly Music BMI, admin. by Bug) 3:20

From the album *Night Train* (Philo 1154), released September 1993. Recorded at Long View Farm, North Brookfield MA by Jesse Henderson. Mixes by Rob Bernstein at Barking Spider, Sudbury MA. Produced by Ellen Karas. Arranged by Bill Morrissey.

*Bill Morrissey* – guitar, vocal; *Richard Gates* – bass.

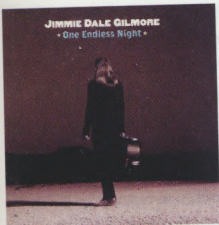


“Baby, Now That I’ve Found You” / **ALISON KRAUSS**

(John MacLeod & Tony Macaulay/BMG Songs ASCAP) 3:49

From the album *Now That I’ve Found You: A Collection* (Rounder 0325, released January 1995. Recorded and mixed by Gary Paczosa at Nightingale Studio, Nashville. Assistant engineers: Ed Simonton & Jason Lehning. Produced by Alison Krauss and Union Station.

*Alison Krauss* – lead vocal, fiddle and viola;  
*Ron Block* – guitars and low tenor vocal; *Adam Steffey* – mandolin and mandola; *Barry Bales* – acoustic bass;  
*Dan Tyminski* – baritone vocal; *Kenny Malone* – conga.



“One Endless Night” / **JIMMIE DALE GILMORE**

(Jimmie Dale Gilmore & David Hammond/Irving Music BMI; Bug Music o/b/o Jade EG Music, BMI; Two Bagger Music BMI; Hydra’s Teeth Music BMI) 3:46

From the album *One Endless Night* (Rounder 3173), released February 2000. Recorded, mixed, and mastered by Buddy Miller at Dogtown Studios. Produced by Buddy Miller and Jimmie Dale Gilmore.

*Jimmie Dale Gilmore* – vocal; *Emmylou Harris* – vocal; *Rob Gjerse* – electric guitar; *Darrell Scott* – acoustic guitar; *Buddy Miller* – mandoguitar; *Byron House* – bass; *Don Heffington* – drums; *Steve Hindalong* – percussion.



“Sing It”  
**MARCIA BALL, IRMA THOMAS, TRACY NELSON**

(David Egan/Bug Music o/b/o Jasben Music, BMI) 4:18

From the album *Sing It!* (Rounder 2152), released January 1998. Recorded at Ultrasonic Studios, New Orleans in April/September 1997 by David Farrell, assisted by Steve Reynolds. Produced by Scott Billington.

*Tracy, Marcia, and Irma* – vocals; *Marcia Ball* – acoustic piano; *Michael Toles* – guitar; *David Torkanowsky* – electric piano; *Lee Allen Zeno* – bass; *Raymond Weber* – drums and percussion.

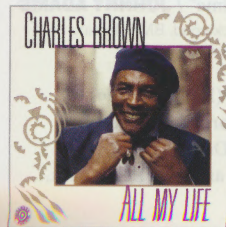


“Do Whatcha Wanna, Pt. 3” / **ReBIRTH BRASS BAND**

(Keith Frazier, Philip Frazier & Kermit Ruffins/Streetbrass Music BMI) 4:29

From the album *Mardi Gras Party* (Rounder 11567), released April 1991. Recorded and mixed by David Farrell at Ultrasonic Recording Studios, New Orleans. Produced by Ron Levy for Levtron Productions.

*Phillip Frazier* – tuba; *Kermit Ruffins* – trumpet; *Keith Frazier* – bass drum; *Glen Andrews* – trumpet; *Reginald Stuart* – trombone; *Roderick Paulin* – tenor saxophone; *Kenneth Austin* – snare drums.

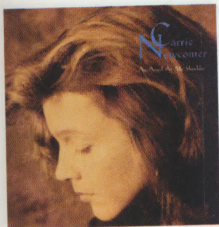


“A Virus Called the Blues” / **CHARLES BROWN**

(Homer Brown-Charles Brown/C. Mose Music BMI) 6:50

From the album *All My Life* (Bullseye Blues 9501), released November 1990. Recorded and mixed at The Magic Shop, New York City by Steve Rosenthal, assisted by Suzanne Dyer, Oliver Straus, and staff. Produced by Ron Levy for Levtron Productions.

*Charles Brown* – vocal, piano; *Dr. John* – vocal, Hammond B3 organ; *Danny Caron* – guitar; *Earl May* – acoustic bass; *Keith Copeland* – drums.

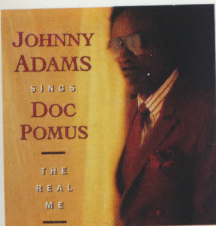


**"Only One Shoe" / CARRIE NEWCOMER**

(Carrie Newcomer/Bug Music o/b/o Carrie Newcomer Music BMI)  
3:15

From the album *An Angel at My Shoulder* (Philo 1163), released February 1994. Recorded by Michael Graham at Silo Sound Studios, Indianapolis IN. Produced by Carrie Newcomer and Michael Graham.

*Carrie Newcomer* – vocal, acoustic guitar; *Susan Denton Staley* – harmony vocal; *Dane Clark* – drums; *Randy Melson* – bass; *Sandy Williams* – electric guitar; *Jamey Reid* – percussion.



**"There Is Always One More Time" / JOHNNY ADAMS**

(Doc Pomus & Ken Hirsch/EMI Blackwood, BMI-Morning Mist Music, BMI-Stazybo Music, BMI) 3:41

From the album *The Real Me* (Rounder 2109), released September 1991. Recorded at Ultrasonic Studios, New Orleans LA by David Farrell. Produced by Scott Billington and Mac Rebennack. A Bee's Knees Production.

*Johnny Adams* – vocal; *Mac "Dr. John" Rebennack* – piano and Hammond B-3 organ; *Duke Robillard* – electric guitar; *James Singleton* – bass; *Johnny Vidacovich* – drums.



**"Something in the Rain"**

**TISH HINOJOSA**

(Tish Hinojosa/Warner Chappell Music o/b/o Manazo Music, ASCAP) 5:02

From the album *Culture Swing* (Rounder 3122), released September 1992.

Recorded at Fire Station Studio, San Marcos TX in May 1992. Engineered by Gary Hickinbotham; Assistant engineer – John Ferrell. Mixed by Mark Hallman at Congress House Studio, Austin. Produced by Tish Hinojosa.

Executive producers: Craig Barker and Michael Barackman/Big World Records.

*Tish Hinojosa* – lead and harmony vocal, rhythm guitar; *Keith Carper* – bass, background vocal; *Marvin Denton Dykhuis* – lead and rhythm guitars, background vocal; *Paul Percy* – drums, percussion; *Paul Glasse* – mandolin; *Gary Primich* – harmonica.

JAMES KING  
*Bed by the Window*



“Bed by the Window” / **JAMES KING**

(Marnie Wilson & Rob Crosby/Peer Music, BMI-Universal Music Careers, BMI-Songs of Grand Coalition, BMI) 4:57

From the album *Bed by the Window* (Rounder 0425), released October 1998. Recorded and mixed by Steve Chandler at Hilltop Recording Studio, Madison, Tennessee. Produced by Ken Irwin.

*James King* – guitar and vocals; *Kevin Prater* – lead guitar; *Jason Moore* – bass; *Adam Poindexter* – guitar; *Bobby Hicks* – fiddle.

“Give Him Cornbread” / **BEAU JOCQUE**

(Andrus Espre/Happy Valley Music – Beau Jocque Music BMI) 4:55

From the album *Beau Jocque and the Zydeco Hi-Rollers* (Rounder 2120), released June 1993. Recorded at Ultrasonic Studios, New Orleans LA by David Farrell. Second engineer: Steve Reynolds. Produced by Scott Billington. A Bee’s Knees Production.

*Beau Jocque* – accordion and lead vocal; *Ray Johnson* – guitar and backing vocal; *Chuck Bush* – bass and backing vocal; *Steve Charlot* – drums and backing vocal; *Wilfred Pierre* – rubboard and backing vocal; *Scott Billington* – cowbell.



“Valse de Kaplan”

**D. L. MENARD, EDDIE LeJEUNE, AND KEN SMITH**

(Trad., arr. By Menard, LeJeune, and Smith/Happy Valley Music BMI) 3:19

From the album *Le Trio Cadien* (Rounder 6049), released March 1992. Recorded and mixed by Jesse Henderson at Longview Farm, North Brookfield MA. Produced by Ken Smith and Ken Irwin.

*D. L. Menard* – guitar; *Eddie LeJeune* – accordion and vocal; *Ken Smith* – fiddle.



“High Lonesome” / **LONGVIEW**

(Gretchen Peters/WB Music ASCAP) 4:04

From the album *High Lonesome* (Rounder 0434), released June 1999. Recorded by Ronnie Freeland at Long View Farm, North Brookfield MA, March 1998. Mixed by Ronnie Freeland at Burnt Hill, Clarksburg MD. Produced by Ken Irwin, Ronnie Freeland, and Longview.

*Dudley Connell* – guitar and tenor vocal; *James King* – lead vocal; *Don Rigsby* – mandolin and high baritone vocal; *Glen Duncan* – fiddle; *Joe Mullins* – banjo; *Marshall Wilborn* – bass.



"In the Palm of Your Hand"

**ALISON KRAUSS AND THE COX FAMILY**

(Ron Block/Bug Music o/b/o Moonlight Canyon Publishing BMI)  
3:25

From the album *I Know Who Holds Tomorrow*  
(Rounder 0307), released January 1994.

Recorded and mixed by Gary Paczosa at Nightingale  
Studios, Nashville, assisted by Ed Simonton and  
Jason Lehning.

Produced and arranged by Alison Krauss.

*Alison Krauss* – fiddle and lead vocal; *Suzanne Cox* –  
baritone vocal; *Sidney Cox* – low tenor vocal;  
*Barry Bales* – acoustic bass; *Ron Block* – guitar and  
banjo; *Rob Ickes* – Dobro; *Kenny Malone* – drums and  
percussion; *Kayton Roberts* – steel guitar;  
*Gary Smith* – piano; *Adam Steffey* – mandolin.



"False Friend Blues"

**RUTH BROWN with**

**CLARENCE GATEMOUTH BROWN**

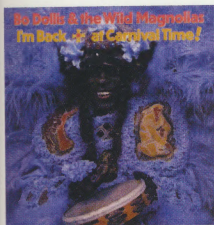
(Ivory Joe Hunter/Unichappell Music Inc.) 4:26

From the album *R+B = Ruth Brown*  
(Bullseye Blues 9583), released September 1997.

Recorded and mixed by David Farrell at Ultrasonic  
Studios, New Orleans LA.

Produced by Scott Billington.

*Ruth Brown* – vocal; *Clarence Gatemouth Brown* –  
lead guitar; *Duke Robillard* – guitar; *Bobby Forrester* –  
piano; *James Singleton* – bass; *Herlin Riley* – drums;  
*Barney Floyd* – trumpet; *Charlie Miller* – trumpet;  
*Delfeayo Marsalis* – trombone; *Wessell Anderson* –  
alto saxophone; *Ed Petersen* – tenor saxophone;  
*Victor Goines* – baritone saxophone.  
Horns arranged by Victor Goines.



“Carnival Time”

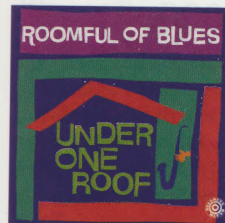
**BO DOLLIS & THE WILD MAGNOLIAS**

(Bug Music o/b/o Carnival Time Music, BMI) 2:42

From the album *I'm Back at Carnival Time!* (Rounder 2094), released January 1990. Recorded at Southlake Recording Studios, Metairie LA by David “Sparky” Farrell. Produced by Ron Levy for Levtron Productions. Associate producers: George Porter and Monk Boudreaux.

*The Wild Magnolias and the Golden Eagles Mardi Gras Indians: Bo Dollis, Chief of the Wild Magnolia Tribe – lead vocal, tambourine, background vocal; Monk Boudreaux, Chief of the Golden Eagles Tribe – tambourine, background vocal; Geenie – congas, background vocal; Penney – tambourine, background vocal; Geechee – bass drum, background vocal; Lil' Crip – cowbell, background vocal; Pretty Queen – tambourine, background vocal; Gator June – tambourine, background vocal.*

*Band: Snooks Eaglin – guitar; George Porter Jr. – bass, background vocal, percussion; Fred Kemp – tenor saxophone; Milton Batiste – trumpet; Ron Levy – background vocal, piano, organ, percussion.*

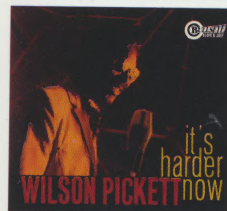


“Standing Here at the Cross Roads” / **ROOMFUL OF BLUES**

(W.C. Clark/Drippin' Publishing BMI) 4:17

From the album *Under One Roof* (Bullseye Blues 9569), released January 1997. Recorded at Normandy Sound Studio, Warren RI on August 20, 1996 by Phil Greene, assisted by Rob Pemberton. Produced by Carl Querfurth. Associate producer: Chris Vachon. Executive producers: Carl Querfurth and Bob Bell.

*Sugar Ray Norcia – vocal, harmonica; Bob Enos – trumpet; Carl Querfurth – trombone; Rich Lataille – alto & tenor saxes; Doug James – baritone sax; Matt McCabe – piano; Chris Vachon – guitar; Ken “Doc” Grace – bass; John Rossi – drums.*



“It's Harder Now” / **WILSON PICKETT**

(Jon & Sally Tiven/Universal Music Z Songs o/b/o Jon Tiven Music, BMI- Universal Music Z Songs o/b/o Sally Tiven Music, BMI) 3:43

From the album *It's Harder Now* (Bullseye Blues 9625), released September 1999. Recorded by Joe Johnson at Studio 900, New York City. Produced by Jon Tiven. New mix by Jon Tiven, 2009.

*Wilson Pickett – vocal; Jon Tiven – guitar; Muzz Skillings – bass; Todd Snare – drums and percussion; Paul Griffin – organ.*

## the **ROUNDER RECORDS** story: the 2000s

If pop music is for the young, roots music is for adults. Pop music is about your first love, roots music about your umpteenth love. Pop music is about dating, roots music about marriage. Pop music is about vacation, roots music about work. Pop music is about peers, roots music about families. Pop music is about novelty, roots music about tradition. This doesn't imply that roots music is in some way superior; the young deserve to have their lives illuminated in song as much as any other generation. But adults have just as much right.

When pop musicians, even those who have enjoyed tremendous success, reach their 40s, it's only natural that they will want to make music about their own stage of life; it's only natural that they will turn to roots music. They always act surprised when their adult music doesn't sell as well as their earlier music, but that's inevitable too, for record buyers skew young. When their pop-oriented major labels inevitably cut them loose, those artists have no choice but to turn to a roots label. And the roots label with the best track record at marketing and creative support was Rounder. Just consider this list of artists who recorded for Rounder in the 2000s: Led Zeppelin's Robert Plant; the Beatles' Paul McCartney; the Cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan; Heart's Ann Wilson; fusion star Béla Fleck; Hollywood film stars Steve Martin, Minnie Driver, and Kevin Bacon; Canadian rock bands Rush and Cowboy Junkies; American folk-rock legends Nanci Griffith and Laura Nyro; British folk-rock legends Fairport Convention and Linda Thompson; pop hit-makers like Boz Scaggs; and country chart-toppers Willie Nelson, Ricky Skaggs, Joe Diffie, and Mary Chapin Carpenter.

Few pop stars have enjoyed more success than Plant, but after Led Zeppelin broke up, he was free to pursue his love of American roots music. At first he concentrated on the blues side of things, but when the 2000 soundtrack for *O Brother,*

*Where Art Thou?* came out, Plant and eight million fellow record buyers fell in love with the album's old-time songs, especially the contributions from current and past Rounder artists such as John Hartford, the Nashville Bluegrass Band, the Cox Family, Norman Blake, and the members of Union Station: Alison Krauss, Dan Tyminski, Barry Bales, Ron Block, and Jerry Douglas. Plant decided he wanted to explore that music with Krauss, with the soundtrack's producer T-Bone Burnett, and with Rounder Records. "There's a kind of English person who knows way more about American music than most Americans do," Burnett pointed out. "Elvis Costello is like that, and so is Robert. But he had never gotten into this part of it—the Dock Boggs and mountain stuff—and now he's chasing that down." Krauss's motivation was obvious to anyone who remembered that she covered Bad Company's "Oh Atlanta" on her breakthrough album, *Now That I've Found You*, or heard her talk excitedly about meeting Foreigner's Lou Gramm in an airport. For all her commitment to bluegrass, she had a weak spot for British hard-rock bands.

The result was *Raising Sand*, credited to Robert Plant/Alison Krauss. "The connection between them is they can both create these different tones that are mystical," Burnett added. "She's probably the best singer in the world right now. She can stand up in front of any number of people, sing *a cappella* and make them cry. Robert's also one of the great singers in the world, but working with him I got to see the artist part — the willingness to follow his vision wherever it goes." You can hear that connection on a song like "Please Read the Letter," which originally appeared on a 1998 album credited to Plant and his Led Zep partner Jimmy Page. The song begins with a slow and spare reading of the country-blues lyrics about the note left behind by a departing spouse but then builds momentum and intensity as if jumping from the 19th century to the 21st. That kind of time-jumping occurs throughout the record, thanks to songs such as Mud Acres' "Killing the Blues," Townes Van Zandt's "Nothin'," the Everly Brothers' "Gone, Gone, Gone," and Doc Watson's



"Your Long Journey," and to picking by such current or former Rounder artists as Norman Blake, Mike Seeger, and the Nashville Bluegrass Band's Dennis Crouch. The album hit #2 on three different charts: *Billboard* pop, *Billboard* country, and British pop. It was certified platinum and on February 8, 2009, the album won all five Grammy Awards for which it was nominated, including Album of the Year and Record of the Year (for "Please Read the Letter"). These are the two biggest prizes in American music, honors that every label in every genre competes for. For Rounder Records to walk away with both statuettes was the ultimate triumph for an independent roots label. Working with co-producer Buddy Miller, Robert clearly continues to draw inspiration from the music which first inspired him, for 2010's *Band of Joy*, represented here by "The Only Sound That Matters."

Steve Martin was as unlikely a Rounder artist as Plant, but the comedian too was drawn back to American roots music as he grew older. His connection was Tony Trischka, who had first recorded for the label as part of the band Country Cooking in 1971, who had introduced Béla Fleck to the label in 1976, who had written the liner notes for Krauss's debut album in 1987, and who had released 10 albums under his own name for Rounder. Back in 1974, Trischka was touring the East Coast with the band Breakfast Special and at a Greenwich Village club the opening act was Martin. "Even when Steve was just starting out," Trischka recalls, "he was already hilarious. He had the arrow through the head, the banjo, and a lot of the material that became famous later. He was also a pretty good straight-ahead bluegrass player." The two five-string pickers bonded and reunited many years later to collaborate on two tracks — the old bluegrass standard "Plunkin' Rag" and Martin's composition "The Crow" — for Trischka's 2007 Rounder album, *Double Banjo Bluegrass Spectacular*. The experience went so well — Trischka, Martin, and Fleck even performed together on *The David Letterman Show* — that Martin chose Rounder to release his first album devoted to music rather than comedy. The title

track from that album, *The Crow*, reunited Martin and Trischka, who says, "The tune he wrote for the new album isn't hard to play, but there's something about it that's quite captivating." It was so captivating that it helped win the Grammy for Best Bluegrass Album.

Irma Thomas was also able to age gracefully at Rounder. She had scored her first R&B hit as a 19-year-old singer from New Orleans in 1960, and she finally earned her first Grammy (for Best Contemporary Blues Album) 46 years later for *After the Rain*. Thomas and producer Scott Billington had picked the album's songs before New Orleans' levees buckled beneath Hurricane Katrina. But after the storm, when Thomas returned to a home soaked in flood waters and a neighborhood emptied of neighbors, songs such as Arthur Alexander's "In the Middle of It All," Mississippi John Hurt's "Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor," Stevie Wonder's "Shelter in the Rain," David Egan's "If You Knew How Much," and Doc Pomus's "I Count the Tears" acquired an extra resonance. Thomas had never sung with such intensity, and her commitment was matched by her pan-Louisiana band: Cajun guitarist Dirk Powell, blues guitarist Sonny Landreth, Galactic drummer Stanton Moore, and New Orleans jazzers David Torkanowsky and James Singleton.

Mary Chapin Carpenter finally signed with Rounder in 2007 after coming oh-so-close to signing 21 years earlier. Rounder's early-detection radar had picked up reports in 1986 that a gifted but unknown young singer-songwriter was working in the coffeehouses around D.C. The label tracked her down and offered her a recording contract. Only a few last details remained to be worked out before she signed, but then a Nashville executive on holiday heard Carpenter as an opening act and made her an offer she couldn't refuse: a deal with Columbia Records. It paid off for her; she won five Grammys and scored twenty top-25 singles on the country charts, including a Cajun dance number "Down at the Twist and Shout," recorded with BeauSoleil, and a version of Lucinda Williams' "Passionate Kisses." Carpen-

ter's own compositions were recorded by Joan Baez, Tony Rice, Cyndi Lauper, and Wynonna Judd. The last of those hits came in 1997, however, and Columbia no longer knew what to do with her. Rounder was the perfect home for her newer, more mature songs that examined the challenge of continuing commitment and determination in the face of so many disappointments. Without minimizing the obstacles, she still found grounds for optimism on tracks such as "I Have a Need for Solitude." "She wanted to make quality records and not play the game anymore," Ken Irwin says. "For us, she's a quality writer and singer and we have a lot in common politically. It felt like a really good fit."

Ricky Skaggs had enjoyed even more country hits and awards than Carpenter, but his streak of hits ran dry too. He realized that the music he was most comfortable with in his 40s was bluegrass, and he released his return to the genre, 1997's *Bluegrass Rules*, on Rounder. Part of his new mission was to pay tribute to the giants of the bluegrass's first generation, whether it was an album tribute to Bill Monroe or a PBS television special that captured Skaggs, Earl Scruggs, and Doc Watson in concert together, backed by such admirers as Krauss and Darrin Vincent. Rounder released the audio CD from the PBS telecast, highlighted by the reprise of Flatt & Scruggs' signature song, "Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms." "Three groups really shaped this music," Skaggs claimed, "Bill Monroe, the Stanley Brothers, and Flatt & Scruggs. It's important for me to pay honor to them while they were still around, because one of these days they won't be."

Spurred on by Hazel Dickens' early example and by Krauss's unparalleled success, women started finding a place in the previously all-male domain of bluegrass, and many of them recorded for Rounder: Claire Lynch, Lynn Morris, the Stevens Sisters, Alecia Nugent, and Rhonda Vincent. Vincent, who had also taken a fling at commercial country, thrived upon her return to bluegrass; she won the IBMA's Female Vocalist of the Year Award seven times in a row, and you can hear

why on "Lonesome Wind Blues." Darrin Vincent, her kid brother, sang harmony on the track as he had on so many tracks as a member of Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder. In 2007, though, he formed a duo act with Jamie Dailey, the longtime lead singer for Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver. "Jamie had become the sound of Quicksilver," Irwin points out, "and Darrin was known for singing parts behind Ricky. It was a funny situation; they had to establish a new sound other than the one they were known for. They soon found they had a similar kind of phrasing, similar senses of humor and similar tastes, so the brother-duet approach made sense. They were so well known and so well liked in the bluegrass world that they got a standing ovation at IBMA before they played their first note of their first gig. They hit that stage and it was as powerful as the Johnson Mountain Boys." Songs such as "More Than a Name on the Wall" from their 2008 debut album *Dailey & Vincent* helped the duo win the bluegrass world's top prize, IBMA Entertainer of the Year, in their first two tries, 2008 and 2009.

The two previous years, that prize had been won by the Grascals, another new band. They too grabbed the attention of the bluegrass world with a poignant story song, Harley Allen's "Me and John and Paul," which wasn't George Harrison's autobiography but rather the tale of three high school friends. "When we recorded Béla Fleck with Spectrum, the fiddler was a kid named Jimmy Mattingly," Irwin explains. "Many years later he called me up to say he was playing bluegrass again after years on the road with Dolly and Garth. They had a lot of energy and were willing to improvise a lot. And Terry Eldredge is just one of the best singers in bluegrass and would probably be one of the best singers in country if anyone was interested in real country these days." One of the decade's other top bluegrass bands was Blue Highway, which boasted three accomplished singer-songwriters in Tim Stafford, Shawn Lane, and Wayne Taylor and an 11-time IBMA Dobroist of the Year winner in Rob Ickes (who also has four solo albums on Rounder). Their ability to balance such

songcraft and virtuoso picking can be heard on Stafford's "Through the Window of a Train."

Rounder made only a few stabs at the jazz market, and the two efforts that clicked had obvious connections with the kind of roots music the label had always done. When Béla Fleck returned to the label, for example, his roots in bluegrass made it easy for the Rounder audience to grasp his jazz and world-music recordings. And when Madeleine Peyroux recast country-folk influences in the jazz-vocal tradition, that same audience could make the connection to Norah Jones's albums. Little did those listeners know that Peyroux had been doing this before Jones had ever released a record. "I heard Madeleine's first record on Atlantic in a boutique shop," Rounder founder Marian Leighton Levy remembers, "and I instantly said, 'Who's that? That's an incredible voice.' I was disappointed and puzzled when she completely dropped out of sight after such a promising start. Years later I heard that she was playing again in New York and looking for the right kind of record deal. I knew we were the label, so I pursued her. Like a lot of people, I refer to her as 'the first Norah Jones.'" Peyroux's first solo album in eight years was 2004's *Careless Love*, produced by Joni Mitchell's producer and ex-husband Larry Klein. "Don't Wait Too Long," co-written by Peyroux, Klein, and Jones's frequent collaborator Jesse Harris, illustrates the singer's roots in both jazz and Americana.

Americana was the term invented to market the alternative-country movement and its related branches. One of the movement's pioneers had been the Illinois band Uncle Tupelo and when the group split, one singer-songwriter, Jeff Tweedy, formed Wilco and the other, Jay Farrar, formed Son Volt. After four albums for Warner Bros. and three for Sony, Son Volt released 2009's *American Central Dust* on Rounder. The song "Down to the Wire" had the mesmerizing, dust-storm-across-the-plains drone that marks all of Farrar's work. San Diego's Delta Spirit put an R&B spin on the Americana sound in songs such as "Trashcan."

"What I love about them," says Bill Nowlin, "is they sound like a real band. They don't disappoint me in person in the way some bands do."

John Virant not only stabilized Rounder's business affairs when he became president/CEO in 1997, he also steered the label northward. He was from St. Louis not Canada, but he fell in love with the Canadian prog-rock band Rush while he was an undergrad at NYU and that enthusiasm eventually extended to other north-of-the-border acts. He lured the Cowboy Junkies to the label in 2001 after they had run their course with Geffen. Typical of their sound is "Small Swift Birds" with Margo Timmins' warbling soprano delivering her brother Michael's melody and lyrics. Rush, also from Toronto, climbed aboard in 2003, and the band nodded to the label's string-band roots by releasing live, acoustic-guitar versions of songs such as 1996's "Resist." Ottawa's Kathleen Edwards also signed in 2003, applying an Americana sound to such Canadian subjects as hockey skates, border crossings, bison herds, and small-town shopping malls. But she was also capable of wielding a knotty stick and a tasty carrot to lure an ex-lover "Back to Me." Sarah Harmer, also from Ontario, joined Rounder in 2004, bringing such sharply observed folk-rock numbers as "Basement Apt." Harmer sang harmony for such Canadian folk-rock acts as Bruce Cockburn, Blue Rodeo, and Great Big Sea, who all recorded for Rounder as well.

Rounder also crossed the Atlantic to license albums by such British folk-rock acts as Pentangle and Fairport Convention, the latter co-founded by Richard Thompson. He had gone on to make a series of brilliant duo records with his first wife, Linda Thompson, who more or less dropped out of sight after the couple's 1984 divorce. But Linda made a remarkable comeback with two albums for Rounder, 2002's *Fashionably Late* and 2007's *Versatile Heart*, reminding everyone how crucial her siren voice and female sensibility had been to those duo records. Richard lent some guitar to the first disc; their son Teddy was prominent on both, and the second

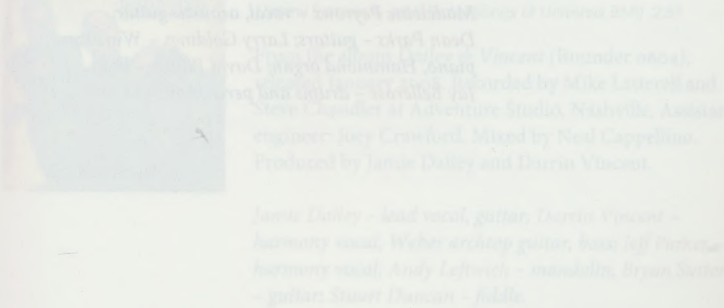
album's title track featured some of New York's best jazz horn players. As indie-rock became big business, the emphasis on hipster cool made tongue-in-cheek humor as out-of-fashion as banjos and accordions. Thus, an alt-rock band like They Might Be Giants, who relied on wit as much as electric guitars, was forced onto a roots-music label like Rounder. They were free to release a song like "Fibber Island," a fantasia about a utopian isle containing rubber guitars, blueberry-pie houses, and button-up cars with square wheels. The happy, sing-along tune worked as either adult surrealism or childhood fairy-tale, and They Might Be Giants were able to maintain parallel careers as performers for both adults and children. Thus they joined a long tradition at Rounder of children's performers such as Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer, Raffi, DinoRock, and John McCutcheon.

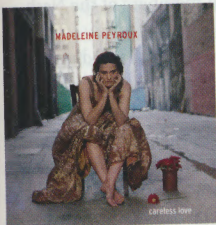
Rounder had gotten its start in the polka world by recording Brave Combo and Flaco Jiménez in the '80s. But the label moved into the polka mainstream when it signed Jimmy Sturr, who went on to win 17 Grammy Awards for Best Polka Album, most of them for Rounder releases. On two albums, 2004's *Rock 'n Polka* and 2005's *Shake, Rattle and Polka*, Sturr adapted rock'n'roll oldies to polka arrangements, often with the help of the original rock stars, as on his collaboration with Duane Eddy on "Rebel Rouser." With an artist as prolific as Jimmy Sturr, it's a challenge to find strong material and concepts which he hasn't already used, but which will show off the strengths and versatility of his band, and Ken Irwin encouraged Sturr to take old rock'n'roll songs and turn them into polkas.

Willie Nelson got his start in music by playing in Texas polka bands, and "The Beer Barrel Polka" has remained a staple of his live sets. Nelson is one of the few musicians to have recorded more albums than Sturr, so he too needed an angle to distinguish his first Rounder release. This time the concept was to have Nelson revisit the country songs from his youth with T-Bone Burnett producing. This album of hard-core hillbilly numbers is called *Country Music*, and it's a fitting irony

that in 2010 Nelson had to go outside Nashville to get it released. The one original on the disc is Nelson's 1959 single, "Man with the Blues," which is updated with help from Buddy Miller, Jim Lauderdale, Ronnie McCoury, and members of the Nashville Bluegrass Band.

"Who would have expected Willie Nelson and Robert Plant to end up on Rounder?" Scott Billington asks. "As odd as the evolution might seem, though, it makes sense, for their roots are in the same place where we started. It makes sense that we'll be releasing new solo albums by Gregg Allman and Robert Plant. The crisis of the record business—the plummeting sales, the file sharing, the increased competition for the listener's attention—has affected Rounder but not as much as the major labels, because we have an underlying aesthetic that they lack. We may deviate from it occasionally, but most of our discs hew to it. It's not a top-down music where corporations decide what everyone else should hear. It's an expression that comes from the bottom up; it starts out as music that people make for each other and then it spreads further."





**“Don’t Wait Too Long”**  
**MADELEINE PEYROUX**

(Madeleine Peyroux – Jesse Harris – Larry Klein/Pennywell Publishing BMI – Bearly Songs-Sony ATV BMI – Exegesis-Chrysalis Music ASCAP) 3:10

From the album *Careless Love* (Rouner 3192), released September 2004. Recorded and mixed at Market Street (Venice) and Paramount Recording Studios (Hollywood) by Helik Hadar. Assistant engineers: Ricky Chao and Nicola Fournier. Produced by Larry Klein.

*Madeleine Peyroux* – vocal, acoustic guitar;  
*Dean Parks* – guitars; *Larry Goldings* – Wurlitzer piano, Hammond organ; *David Pilitch* – bass;  
*Jay Bellerose* – drums and percussion.



**“Down to the Wire”** / **SON VOLT**

(Jay Farrar/Bug Music o/b/o Grain Elevator Music BMI) 4:19

From the album *American Central Dust* (Rouner 3274), released July 2009. Recorded by John Agnello, Mark Spencer, Chris Masterson, and Jason Hutto in St. Louis MO. Mixed by Joe Henry and Ryan Freeland at The Garfield House, South Pasadena, CA.

*Jay Farrar* – vocal, acoustic guitar; *Dave Bryson* – drums;  
*Andrew Duplantis* – bass guitar, backing vocal;  
*Chris Masterson* – lap steel, backing vocal;  
*Mark Spencer* – keyboards, backing vocal.

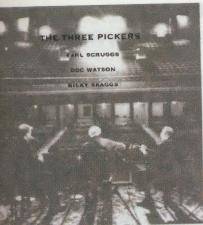


**“More than A Name on A Wall”** / **DAILEY & VINCENT**

(Jimmy Fortune & John Rimel/Songs of Universal BMI) 2:57

From the album *Dailey & Vincent* (Rouner 0604), released January 2008. Recorded by Mike Latterell and Steve Chandler at Adventure Studio, Nashville. Assistant engineer: Joey Crawford. Mixed by Neal Cappellino. Produced by Jamie Dailey and Darrin Vincent.

*Jamie Dailey* – lead vocal, guitar; *Darrin Vincent* – harmony vocal, Weber archtop guitar, bass; *Jeff Parker* – harmony vocal; *Andy Leftwich* – mandolin; *Bryan Sutton* – guitar; *Stuart Duncan* – fiddle.



“Roll In My Sweet Baby’s Arms”

**THE THREE PICKERS:**

**EARL SCRUGGS, DOC WATSON, RICKY SKAGGS**

(Trad., arr. by Preston Young/public domain) 3:07

From the album *The Three Pickers* (Rounder 0526), released July 2003. Recorded by Luke Wooten, live at the R. J. Reynolds Auditorium in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Produced by Ricky Skaggs for Skaggs Place Productions and Jim Brown for Ginger Group Productions.  
Co-Producer: Sarah Cullen.

*Earl Scruggs* – banjo and vocal; *Doc Watson* – acoustic guitar and vocal; *Ricky Skaggs* – mandolin and vocal. With special guest *Alison Krauss* on fiddle.  
Ensemble also includes: *Gary Scruggs* – electric bass; *Glen Duncan* – fiddle; *Brad Davis* – acoustic guitar; *John Jorgenson* – mandolin; *Rob Ickes* – Dobro; *Richard Watson* – acoustic guitar; *Jim Mills* – banjo; *Paul Brewster* – acoustic guitar; *Darrin Vincent* – acoustic guitar; *Cody Kilby* – acoustic guitar; *Andy Leftwich* – fiddle.



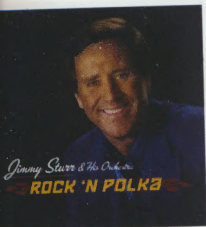
“Man With The Blues”

**WILLIE NELSON**

(Willie Nelson/Glad Music Publishing & Recording LP BMI/Pappy Dailey Music BMI) 2:19

From the album *Country Music* (Rounder 3280), released April 2010.  
Recorded and mixed by Mike Piersante at Sound Emporium Studios, Nashville.  
Second engineer and editing - Jason Wormer.  
Assistant engineers - Kyle Ford, Emile Kelman.  
Produced by T Bone Burnett.

*Willie Nelson* – vocal, gut-string acoustic guitar; *Buddy Miller* – electric guitar; *Chris Sharp* – acoustic guitar; *Dennis Crouch* – acoustic bass; *Riley Baugus* – banjo; *Ronnie McCoury* – mandolin; *Russell Paul* – pedal steel; *Stuart Duncan* – fiddle; *Mickey Raphael* – harmonica; *Jim Lauderdale* – vocal harmony.



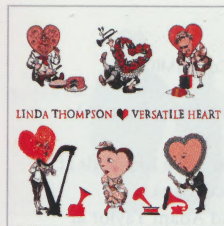
“Rebel Rouser”

**JIMMY STURR**

(Duane Eddy-Lee Hazelwood/Unichappell Music BMI) 1:54

From the album *Rock 'n Polka* (Rounder 6109), released September 2004. Recorded by Tom Pick at Bennett Studios, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Engineers: Tom Pick and Mark Capps. Assistant engineer: Brian Dozoretz. Produced by Ken Irwin, Joe Donofrio, and Tom Pick.

*Eric Parks, Kenny Harbus, Al Noble: trumpets; Nick DeVito, Joe Magnuszewski, Ray Barno: alto saxophones; Johnny Karas – tenor saxophones; Al Piatkowski, Wally Czerniawski – accordion; Dave Greco – bass; Dennis Coymán – drums; Frank Urbanovitch – fiddle; Keith Slattery – piano. Special guest: Duane Eddy on electric guitar.*



“Versatile Heart”

**LINDA THOMPSON**

(Linda Thompson and Teddy Thompson/Universal Polygram o/b/o Hatfish Music, ASCAP-Chrysalis Music, ASCAP) 3:24

From the album *Versatile Heart* (Rounder 3217), released August 2007. Recorded at Brooklyn Records, Brooklyn, New York by Andy Taub. Assistant engineers: Yohei Goto and Kaori Kinoshita. Additional recording at Monkey Boy Studios, New York City, by Brian Fulk and at Betrayal Studios, New York City, by Edward Haber. Mixed by Jay Newland at The Grateful Shed, Norwalk, Connecticut. Produced by Edward Haber. Co-produced by Teddy Thompson.

*Linda Thompson – vocal; Jenni Muldaur – harmony vocal; David Mansfield – mandolin; Teddy Thompson – acoustic guitars; Jeff Hill – electric bass; George Javori – drums, dumbek, tambourine; Bill Dobrow – shakers. The Downtown Silver Band: Steven Bernstein (alto horn, flugelhorn), Frank London (alto horn, cornet), Dan Levine (euphonium, tuba). Brass arranged by Steven Bernstein.*



“In the Middle Of It All”

**IRMA THOMAS**

(Arthur Alexander/Combine Music Corp. BMI) 4:45

From the album *After the Rain* (Rounder 2186), released April 2006.

Recorded by David Farrell and Steve Reynolds at Dockside Studios, Maurice, Louisiana.

Mixed by Paul Q. Kolderie and Adam Taylor at Camp Street Studio, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Produced by Scott Billington.

*Irma Thomas* – vocal; *Dirk Powell* – electric guitar; *Sonny Landreth* – slide guitar; *David Torkanowsky* – electric piano; *James Singleton* – acoustic bass; *Stanton Moore* – drums.



“Please Read the Letter”

**ROBERT PLANT AND ALISON KRAUSS**

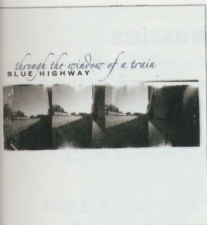
(Michael Lee, Jimmy Page, Charlie Jones, Robert Plant/BMG Songs ASCAP, BMG Music Publishing International PRS, Sons of Inion Limited PRS, Succubus Music Ltd. PRS) 5:53

From the album *Raising Sand* (Rounder 9075), released October 2007.

Recorded and mixed by Mike Piersante at Sound Emporium, Nashville; Electro Magentic Studios, Los Angeles; The Village Recorder, Los Angeles; Sage & Sound, Hollywood. Editing by Jason Wormer. Additional engineering by Jason Wormer and Stacy Parrish. Assistant engineers: Emile Kelman, Kyle Ford, Vanessa Parr, Alex Pavlides. Produced by T Bone Burnett.

*Robert Plant and Alison Krauss* – vocals; *Jay Bellerose* – drums; *Dennis Crouch* – bass; *Marc Ribot and T Bone Burnett* – acoustic guitars; *Marc Ribot* – electric guitar; *Alison Krauss* – fiddle.





“Through the Window Of A Train” / **BLUE HIGHWAY**

(Tim Stafford and Steve Gulley/Daniel House Music BMI and Gulley's Curve Music BMI) 3:08

From the album *Through the Window Of A Train* (Rounder 0594), released February 2008. Recorded and mixed by Jim Price at Maggard Sound, Big Stone Gap, Virginia. Assistant engineer: Alan Maggard. Produced by Blue Highway.

*Tim Stafford* – guitar and harmony vocal; *Wayne Taylor* – bass and lead vocal; *Shawn Lane* – mandolin, and harmony vocal; *Rob Ickes* – resonator guitar; *Jason Burleson* – banjo.



“Resist” / **RUSH**

(Lee, Lifeson, Peart/Core Music SOCAN/SESAC) 4:26

From the album, *R30: 30th Anniversary World Tour* (Anthem/Zoe DVD 1082), released November, 2005. Recorded by Marcus Kotter. Mixed by Richard Chycki and Alex Lifeson, assisted by Adrian Lifeson. Produced by Pierre Lamoureux & Allan Weinrib.

*Geddy Lee* – acoustic guitar and vocal;  
*Alex Lifeson* – acoustic guitar.



“Small Swift Birds” / **COWBOY JUNKIES**

(Michael Timmins/Universal Music Z Tunes o/b/o Paz Junk Music, ASCAP) 3:39

From the album *Open* (Zoe 1020), released January 2001. Recorded by Daryl Smith at Chemical Sound and Beaconsfield Studios, Toronto. Mixed by Peter Moore. Assistant engineers: James Heidebrecht and Rudy Rempel. Produced by Michael Timmins.

*Margo Timmins* – vocal; *Michael Timmins* – guitar; *Peter Timmins* – drums; *Alan Anton* – bass; *Linford Detweiler* – keyboards; *Jeff Bird* – percussion; *Karin Bergquist* – backing vocal.



“Basement Apt.” / **SARAH HARMER**

(Sarah Harmer/Cold Snap Music SOCAN) 4:07

From the album *You Were Here* (Zoe 1017), released January 2000. Recorded and mixed by Peter Prilesnik. Mix assisted by Eric Ratz and Sarah H. Produced by Sarah Harmer and Peter Prilesnik.

*Sarah Harmer* – vocal, acoustic guitar; *Pete P.* – bass, beats, electric guitar; *Gord Tough* – electric guitar; *Gavin* – drums; *Jenny Whiteley* – harmony vocal.



“I Have a Need for Solitude”  
**MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER**

(Mary Chapin Carpenter/Why Walk Music ASCAP) 3:42

From the album *The Age of Miracles* (Zoe 1133), released April 2010. Recorded and mixed by Chuck Ainlay at Front Stage, at Sound Stage Studios, Nashville. Assistant engineers: Jim Cooley, Brad Winters, Brandon Schexnayder, and James Sinyard. Produced by Matt Rollings & Mary Chapin Carpenter.

*Russ Kunkel* – drums, percussion, shaker; *Duke Levine* – National guitar, electric guitar; *Glenn Worf* – double bass; *Matt Rollings* – B-3 organ; *Mary Chapin Carpenter* – vocal, acoustic guitar, background vocals; *Eric Darken* – percussion.



“Lonesome Wind Blues”  
**RHONDA VINCENT**

(Wayne Raney/Ft. Knox Music Inc., Trio Music BMI) 3:02

From the album *Back Home Again* (Rounder 0460), released January 2000. Recorded by Ronny Light at Lighthouse Sound Studio, Nashville. Mixed by Ronny Light and Rhonda Vincent. Produced by Rhonda Vincent and Ronny Light.



*Darrin Vincent* – bass and harmonies; *Bryan Sutton* – guitar; *Marc Pruett* – banjo; *Ron Stewart* – fiddle; *Rhonda Vincent* – lead vocal and mandolin.

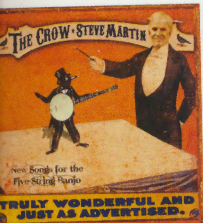
“Me and John and Paul”  
**THE GRASCALS**

(Harley Allen/Coburn Music BMI) 3:13

From the album *The Grascals* (Rounder 0549), released February 2005.

Tracks recorded by Patrick Murphy and vocals recorded by Tony Smith at 2 Monkeys Studio, Nashville. Mixed by Patrick Murphy at Quad Studios, Nashville. Produced by The Grascals.

*Terry Eldredge* – lead vocal, acoustic guitar; *Jamie Johnson* – harmony vocal; *David Talbot* – banjo, acoustic guitar; *Jimmy Mattingly* – fiddle, mandolin; *Terry Smith* – bass; *Danny Roberts* – mandolin. Additional musicians: *Tom Rhody* – percussion; *Kent Wells* – acoustic guitar; *Lloyd Green* – steel guitar.

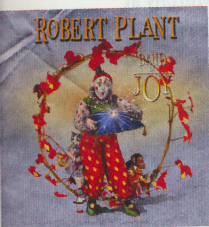


**“The Crow” / STEVE MARTIN**

(Steve Martin/LA Films Music) 3:23

From the album *The Crow* (Rounder 0647), released May 2009. Recorded at Bennett Studios, Englewood NJ by Dae Bennett, Johnnie Truesdale, and Travis Stefl, with some overdubs at Ocean Way Studios, Nashville by Pat McMakin, Rob Clark, and George Tutko. Produced by John McEuen.

*Steve Martin* – banjo; *Michael Daves* – guitar; *Matt Flinner* – mandolin; *Tony Trischka* – harmony banjo; *Skip Ward* – bass.



**“The Only Sound That Matters”**

**ROBERT PLANT**

(Gregory Vanderpool/Patsytoo Music, ASCAP) 3:44

From the album *Band of Joy* (Rounder 9099), released in September, 2010. Recording, editing, mixing and reconstructions by Mike Poole. Recorded at Woodland Studios, Nashville, TN, House of Blues Studio, Nashville, TN and Clinton Recording Studio, New York, NY. Assistant engineer: Gordon Hammond. Mixed at House of Blues Studios, Nashville, TN. Studio assistant: Ted Wheeler. Produced by Robert Plant & Buddy Miller.

*Robert Plant* – vocal; *Buddy Miller* – mandoguitar; *Darrell Scott* – acoustic guitar, pedal steel guitar and backing vocal; *Marco Giovino* – drums and percussion; *Byron House* – upright bass.

Buddy Miller appears courtesy of New West Records  
Darrell Scott appears courtesy of Full Light Records

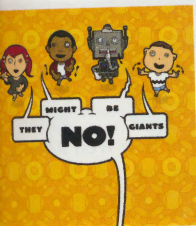


**“Trashcan” / DELTA SPIRIT**

(B. Young, M. Vasquez, K. Winrich, J. Jameson & S. Walker/ Cherry Lane Music o/b/o The Order of The Spanish Preacher, ASCAP) 3:37

From the album *Ode to Sunshine* (Rounder 9082), released August 2008. Recorded in a cabin in Julian, CA courtesy of Derek Shaw. Produced and recorded by Delta Spirit, with additional engineering by Elijah Thompson. Mixed by Elijah Thompson at Sonikwire and Shelter Studios,

*Delta Spirit: Brandon Young, Matthew Vasquez, Kelly Winrich, Jonathan Jameson, and Sean Walker.*

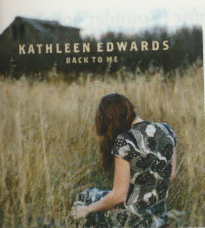


“Fibber Island” / **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS**

(John Flansburgh & John Linnell/TMBG Music BMI) 2:10

From the album *No!* (Rounder 8113), released June 2002. Recorded and mixed by Andrew Caiati at Coyote Studio, Brooklyn NY. Coyote engineers: Cosmos Heidtman, Stan Wright, Jason Spittle.

*John Linnell plays keyboards and sings; John Flansburgh plays guitar and sings; Dan Hickey plays the drums; Danny Weinkauf plays the bass; Dan Miller plays the guitar very well.*



“Back To Me” / **KATHLEEN EDWARDS**

(Kathleen Edwards and Colin Cripps/Peer Canada, SOCAN-Sony ATV Songs, BMI) 3:31

From the album *Back To Me* (Zoe 1047), released March 2005. Recorded by Denis Tougas at Reaction Studios, Toronto. Mixed by Jim Scott at Cello Studios, Los Angeles, assisted by Chris Testa. Produced by Colin Cripps.

*Kathleen Edwards – acoustic guitars; Joel Anderson – drums; Colin Cripps – electric guitars; Johnny Dymond – bass; Eric Heywood – pedal steel; Peter von Althen – tambourine, shaker.*

Produced by The Rounder Collective  
Remastered by Jonathan Wyner at M-Works, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Notes by Geoffrey Himes  
Photographs from the Rounder Archive  
Design by Nancy Given



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*the 1970s*

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*story*



*the 1990s*

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